

JUNE, 1930

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Drawn by Wm. Hernandez

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SISTER JOHNSON'S STORY

By LANGSTON HUGHES

Happy Birthday!

To NEW MASSES

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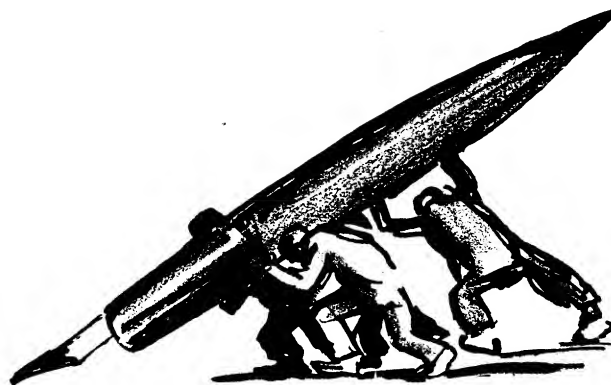
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Drawn by Fred Ellis

The Autobiography of THE NEW MASSES

(We're getting older, a few subs will cheer us up!)

1910—BORN

(In the basement of a restaurant in the Rand School)

1912—INSPIRED

(John Sloan, Maurice Becker, Art Young, Louis Untermeyer, Max Eastman and others take over the Masses from a cook who lost his shirt on it.)

1917—SUPPRESSED

(Art Young on trial for his life falls asleep in the courtroom)

1918—CHANGE NAME

(The Liberator—Jack Reed in Russia reports Ten Days That Shook The World—Lenin writes the introduction when the book comes out)

1924—CHANGE AGAIN

(The Liberator becomes the Workers monthly)

1926—OLD TRICKS WITH NEW WRINKLES

(In May, The New Masses appears)

1930—LAFAYETTE WE ARE STILL HERE!

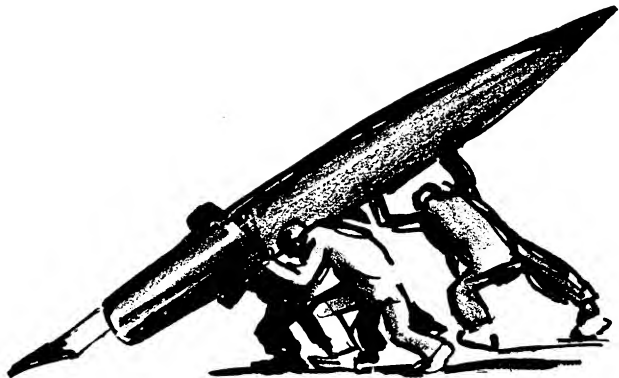
(New Format—New editor)

Meanwhile we printed some stories, poems, reviews and drawings. You can find a good many of them in books, anthologies, histories of literature and the art galleries.

The next 20 years will be the hardest unless we get a few more subs.

On our 4th and 20th birthday we offer a 4 months trial sub for 50 cents.

NEW MASSES



Drawn by Fred Ellis

1910—1926—1930

Fifth Year of the New Masses—Twenty First Year of the Masses

NEW MASSES

VOLUME 6

JUNE, 1930

NUMBER 1

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WALT CARMON, *Managing Editor*

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MICHAEL GOLD

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Let's have more jails in America; this is the demand the reformers make. Not more life in abundance, more leisure and co-operative joy, but more jails!

Every court is overworked; every jail is jammed tighter than a stockyard chute with five and ten times the number of victims it was built for. The "criminal" class is growing at a dizzy rate. It is made up mostly of boys under thirty, who come from a background of poverty. They are young Americans who believed what was taught them in public school; success, money-getting, individualism. They acted on these teachings.

They made a bad mistake; they were small-timers. It is much safer to be a crooked bank president than an honest bank robber.

The Ohio Massacre—

In Ohio last month 350 prisoners were burned to death horribly. Fire was discovered in time to save them all. But the keepers would not unlock the cells; the warden could not be located to give the order.

So the young jailbirds screamed, cursed, tore at the bars, yelled and roasted as the flames ate their flesh away; all this under the eyes of the official perverts with the keys to release them.

Pretty American tableau. There was a scandal afterward and the usual fake investigation. But nothing will come out of it all. Even the liberals will soon forget; they don't like to think about such massacres.

Only the prisoners of America will remember. And only they can help themselves; no one else will or can.

Soviet Prisons—

In Soviet Russia the punitive idea has been removed from penology. Prisoners are not treated for crime but for ignorance. They are urged to study and think.

Peasants are taught reading, writing, history, science, economics. Unskilled workers are given trades, and paid the standard outside wage. There are no locks on the cells; they are only bedrooms. Many of them contain flowers, books, guitars.

There are university lectures; the prisoners have their own culture and athletic clubs; they give plays; they have mass choruses. The discipline is no harsher than the ordinary boarding school.

Visitors are allowed at all times; and a man's wife and children can spend long hours with him every day.

Often peasant prisoners are allowed to go back to their villages for the spring sowing or the autumn harvest.

Every prisoner gets a two-weeks vacation during the year, when, without guards or other restraint, he is allowed to travel anywhere in Soviet Russia. When I was in Moscow I was invited to a party given such a vacationing prisoner by his friends.

Country Club—

The American bourgeois shudders at such things. The papers are always full of letters from indignant Babbitts: "Shall we coddle our prisoners? Shall we turn the prisons into country clubs?" The Kept Kartoonist often designs a Kartoon on this theme; a burly unshaven brute of a prisoner eating roast duck and celery, or playing golf in his prison suit.

Sometimes one finds wardens who are more humane and intelligent about the situation than the bourgeois scum who run the world outside.

Soviet Russia has found that a humane, rational prison regime is the most practical one. A man is not brutalized by years of torture and repression, then turned loose to revenge himself on the community.

It is safer to educate him. It is safer to make a social human being of him. It is better for everyone that he be inspired to a co-operative viewpoint. What touching letters and articles in some of the Soviet prison papers; stories of hope, of self-discovery, of earnest dedication to a new Communist life.

Prisons are schools in Soviet Russia, where backward students are taught the new mass-art which is Communist living.

And the jails are decreasing there year by year. Why? Because the wealth of the nation has been socialized.

In America the national wealth is being concentrated rapidly into a few thousand pockets. About 85% of the crime is against private property. More mergers, more millionaires, more unemployed, more cops, jails, "criminals" in America. And it must grow worse before it can grow better. We are living in the deepest, hottest ring of the capitalist hell—we are in America, brothers.

Mahatma Gandhi and Mahatma Macdonald—

For years Ramsay Macdonald was the white-haired boy of all the liberals, pacifists, Socialists of this country. He was god's gift to the oppressed. He sang hymns, employed the pathetic whine of a minister while speechifying. A lovely person. He



The City—Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

promised to build the new Jerusalem if elected, by Painless Parker methods. He would abolish battleships, nationalize the coal mines, raise every worker's wages, solve the unemployment problem, perform other miracles so smoothly that not even a millionaire could complain.

Well, he had been in office for many months, and had done absolutely nothing that Winston Churchill or Herbert Hoover had not already done. But his friends still believed in him. He was a lovely soul, with his hair and cultured voice.

But he has just slammed Mahatma Gandhi into jail, without a trial or any vestige of constitutionalism. This is a situation! For alas and alack, Gandhi is a Mahatma! He is even more holy than Macdonald, even more pacifistic, pious, non-resistant, spiritual. And the American god-seekers revere him as much and more than their Ramsay.

One Mahatma slapping another Mahatma into the familiar can! This is a pretty pickle, a Gilbert and Sullivan dilemma. Which Mahatma to revere now? The one in, or t'other on the outs?

The science of it is: Socialism today is the same as when it voted war credits in each country in 1914; a party whose chief object is to rationalize and save capitalism.

Macdonald, like most Socialists, is a nationalist. He believes in

the British Empire, just as German Socialists still believe in Pan-Germanism.

He can do what he wants to Gandhi with impunity; the Socialist International will not dare reprove him. They are all tarred with the same stick. In Poland, for instance, the Socialists will not admit Jews into their trade unions, or permit them to parade with the Gentile Socialists on May Day. (*Menorah Journal*, April 1930.) Our own Morris Hillquitt has not yet protested against this. He never will.

Hindu Gandhi—

Gandhi is a striking figure. In his own way he is putting up a valiant fight for Indian freedom. He is a great agitator at the moment. But why not tell the truth about him; his mind is both shallow and reactionary.

For one thing, he is definitely against the workers. He opposes all forms of trade unionism, and strikes.

For another, he is against all machinery and modern science. He prefers that India remain holy and medieval, even though the beautiful sacred dung-heaps are piled in every village, to spread vast epidemics; even though the peasants plow with sticks, and die in great famines.

He believes firmly in the superstitions of the Hindu religion. I have read a long solemn editorial by Gandhi in his paper, *Young India*, in which he upholds the Hindu dogma of the sacredness of the cow; reasons for this dogma with all the skill and rhetoric of a New Humanist, and reproves the Moslems for blaspheming the Cow.

World leaders should be made of sterner stuff. Even Mary Eddy was more of a realist than this. It is frivolous to believe in sacred cows. Thousands of Hindu and Moslem workers believe neither in sacred cows or in a Gandhi however. The future of Mother India belongs to them alone.

Trotsky's Pride—

One point that struck me in Trotsky's autobiography. What Luciferian pride in every line! What thinly veiled contempt for "man, that malicious animal," as one of his phrases has it. Trotsky is another Lasalle; he is not another Marx or Lenin. He is a literary genius, he is an organizing genius, he performed great miracles during the harshest days of the Revolution. But he is also a beurocrat and embryo Napoleon.

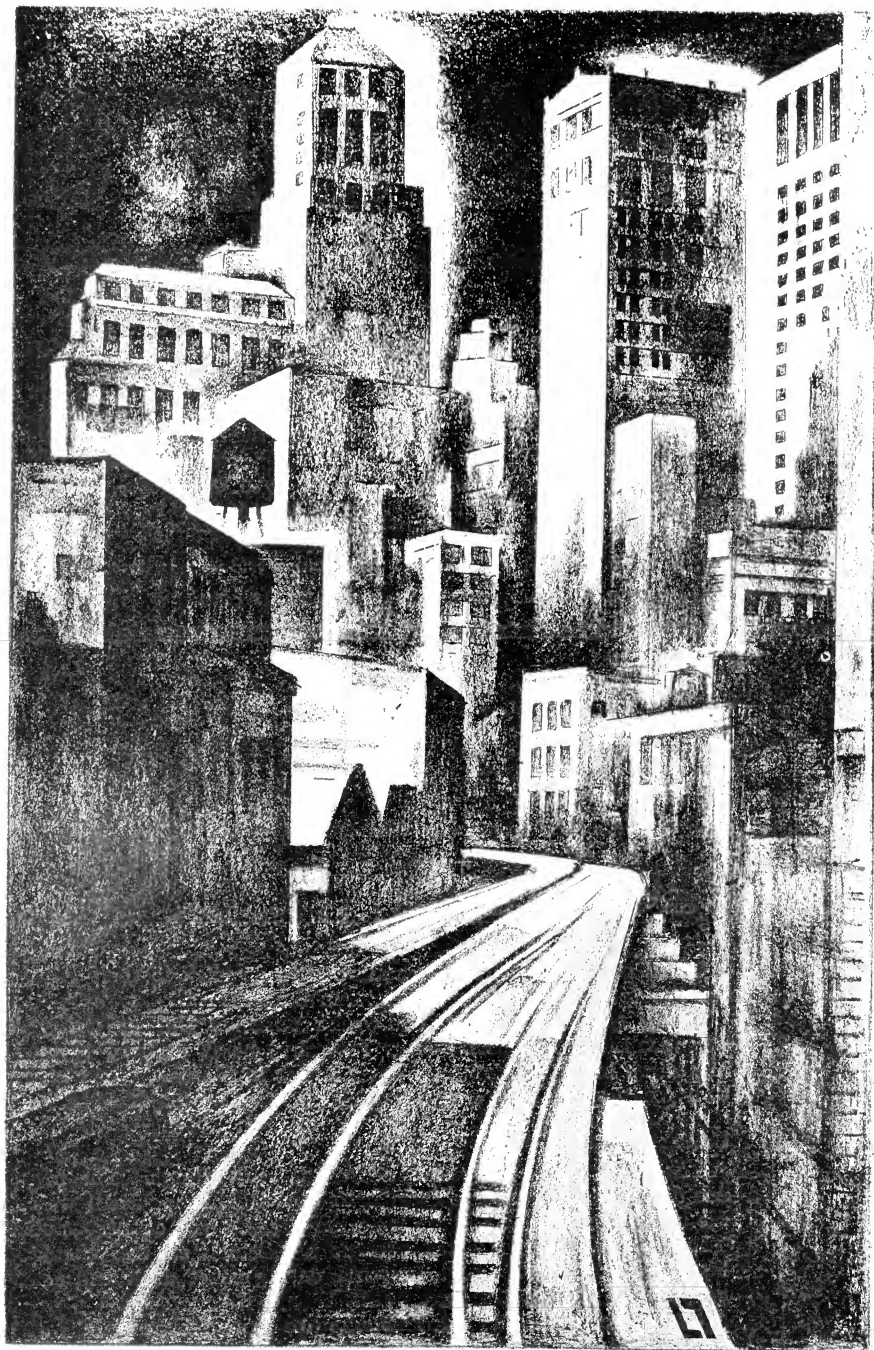
Every line in his brilliant book breathes the dangerous spirit of a man of destiny.

Trotsky's fall is one of the romantic tragedies of history. I, for one, can shed no tears for him; I care for something greater than Trotsky's fate; the proletarian revolution. He has chosen to endanger this revolution. Every bourgeois liberal in America and the rest of the world is now a Trotskyite, and uses his book as an argument against all the Russian Revolution. This may not be what Trotsky intended, but it is the total effect of his opposition so far.

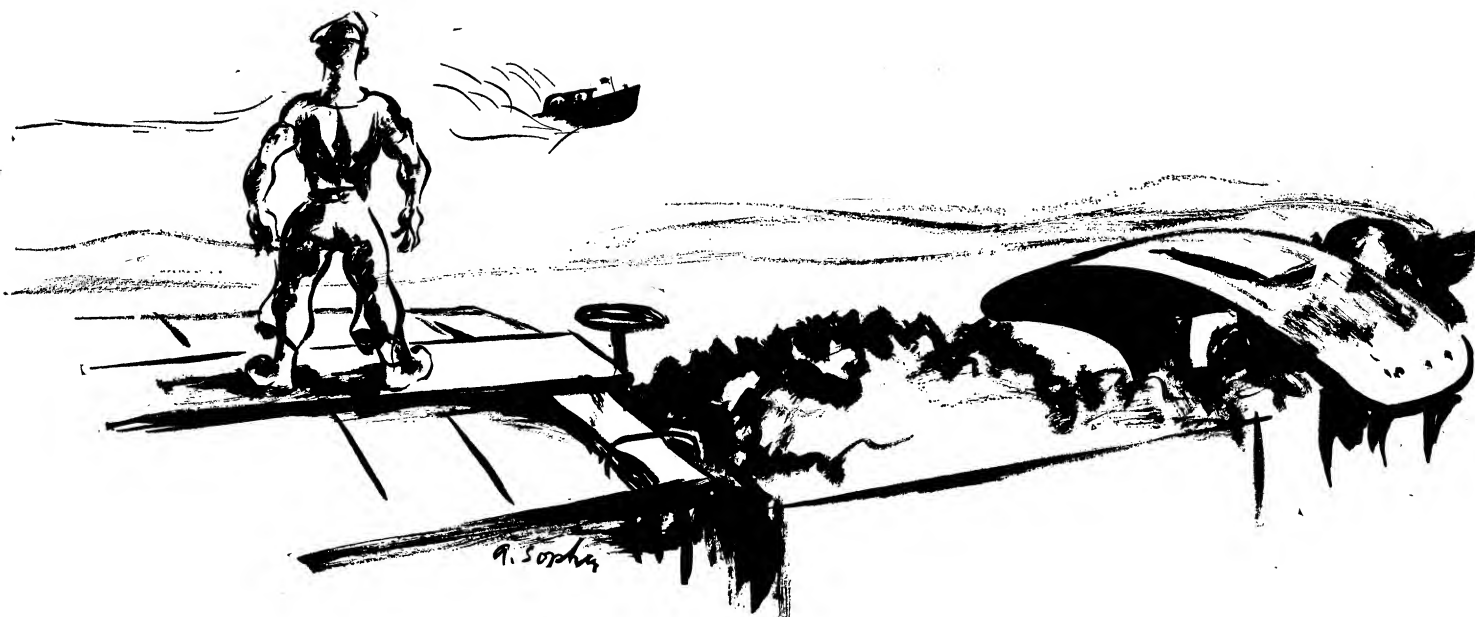
Trotsky is too convinced that he is a great man. The world has been poisoned by such "great men." Trotsky writes of the revolution as a chess player might, or a general. He has no feeling for the pathos, the poetry and human beauty of the proletarian masses. Compare his pages on the Bolshevik uprising with John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

Trotsky writes of telephones, manifestoes, and maneuvers. Reed tells of these, but gives us, too, the epic heroism and passion of the simple masses.

Intellectual pride; this is Trotsky's chief sin. He is always sure that he is right. But any worker could tell him why he now is wrong. In a strike, one does not go out scabbing because one disagrees with one's comrades. The objective effect of Trotsky's labors today may be compared to this, whatever his motives.



The City—Lithograph by Louis Lozowick



Drawn by Aaron Sopher

Trotskyism—

No one wants to jeer at Trotsky. No one really can. Trotsky is now an immortal part of the great Russian Revolution. He is surely one of the permanent legends of humanity, like Savonarola or Danton. For good or evil, he will never be forgotten.

But there are no supermen. All men are fallible. Trotsky has been wrong at various times in the past. It seems to me he is grievously, dangerously wrong at the present hour.

Trotskyites like to sneer at anyone who dares to say this. The inference is everyone else is too stupid, too mediocre, too misled to attempt to criticize Trotsky. I hate this snob attitude in both Trotsky and his followers.

Every worker has the right, and has the duty, to criticize and even kick out his leaders when necessary. The worker may be

wrong at different times, but it is better that a few leaders should suffer occasionally, than that the masses should be betrayed.

No one should follow any leader blindly. No, there are decidedly no supermen in the world as yet.

I have read Trotsky's manifestoes in the past few years, and the Trotskyite press. I have tried sincerely to understand, but can find nothing but a bitter and narrow partisanship—nothing basic or constructive there.

The bulk of Trotskyist thought today consists of personal abuse and hatred of the Communist leadership in every land. This is not a program of any kind.

Trotskyite tactics seem to consist of nothing but endless criticism of the mistakes and shortcomings of Communism. This, too, is not a program. There are no straight lines in history. Mistakes and experiments must be made. There is no easy road to world Communism. "Deviations" are sure to occur.

Trotskyism has degenerated into a kind of cheap cat-calling from the gallery. The working-class is fighting for its life on every front and the Trotskyites stand by and sneer when it slips or retreats at necessary times.

Can any honest Trotskyite tell us that every deed, every thought of their group at present is not devoted to anything but a program of blind obstruction?

They are separated from the main stream of history. They have become a sect. It is hard to differentiate the objective value of their propaganda from that of Kerensky's. In every page of Trotsky's book, in every line of the Trotskyite press, only one dogma is hammered home to the reader: that the Russian Revolution is a failure: that there is a reaction in Soviet Russia. Emma Goldman was exactly as bigoted.

Every day brings news of some new advance toward Communism in Russia. Every day brings its demonstration that the Soviet masses are awake, alive, aflame with deathless revolutionary ardor.

No Trotskyite can deny that the Five-Year Plan is as great a social miracle as the military uprising.

But no Trotskyite will admit that *anything* is sound in Soviet Russia. What a tragic decadence in a man as great as Trotsky, what a loss to the Revolution! Personal passion has at last grown like a cataract over the eyes of one who was an eagle, and could stare into the core of the fiery sun of revolution. Blind!

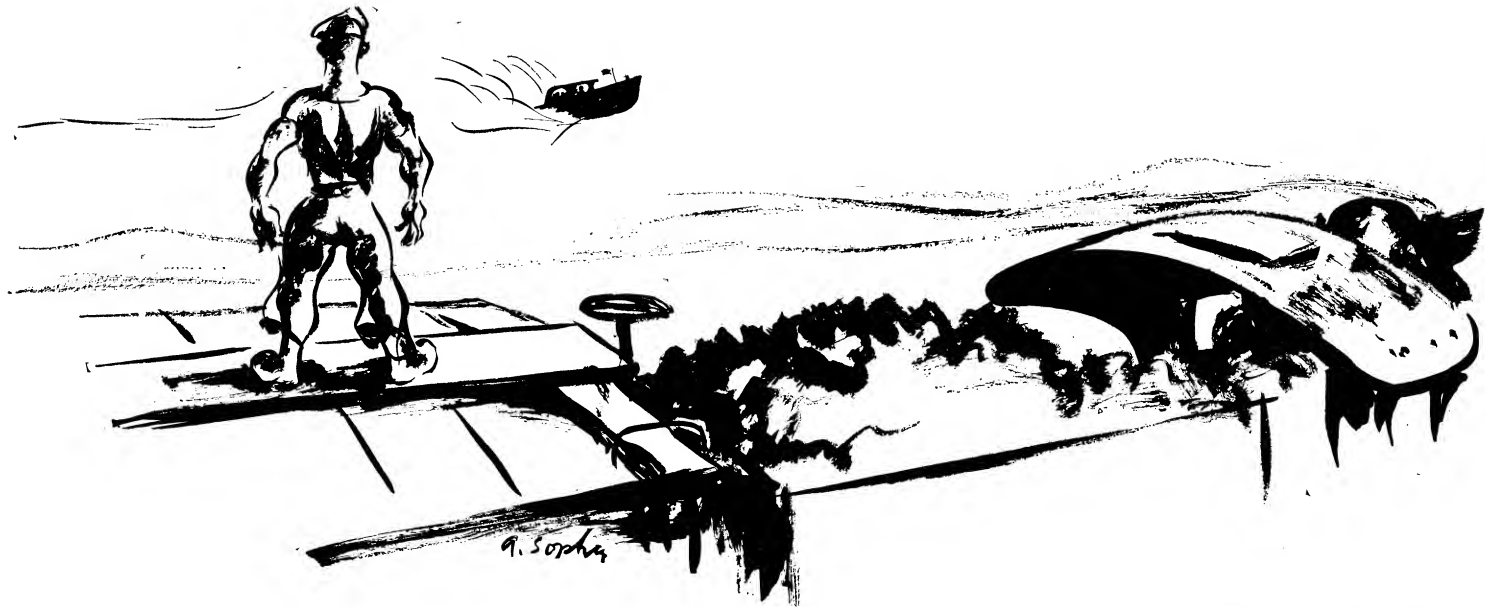
A Great American Prophet

*He was born in Iowa,
Went to college in Kansas,
And preached the gospel in Boston.
For six years he talked about God,
Damned the Communists,
Blessed the meek,
And made love to the organist.*

*One day
His wife eloped with the sexton,
His daughter married a bootlegger,
And the organist gave him a run-around.
He cursed the flesh,
Robbed the poor-box,
And left Boston on a night train.*

*Now
In Los Angeles
He sports the robe
Of a Swami, sleeps with an ex-countess
And peddles horoscopes
To school-ma'ams, movie stars, and sad-eyed poets
At ten dollars a throw;
While
God slumbers in the dust
Of an old memory.*

JIM WATERS.



Drawn by Aaron Sopher

LANGSTON HUGHES

SISTER JOHNSON'S STORY

(As told on the front porch at Aunt Hager's house on a summer evening in a Kansas town)

The old sister took a long draw on her corn-cob pipe and a fiery red spot glowed in its bowl. While Willie-Mae and Sandy stopped playing and sat down on the porch, she began a tale they had all heard at least a dozen times.

"It's tole you 'bout it befo', ain't I?" asked Sister Johnson.

"Not me," lied Jimboy, who was anxious to keep her going.

"No, you haven't," Harriett assured her.

"Well, it were like dis," and the story unwound itself, the preliminary details telling how, as a young freed-girl after the Civil War, Sister Johnson went into service for a white planter's family in a Mississippi town near Vicksburg. While attached to this family she married Tom Johnson, then a fieldhand, and raised five children of her own during the years that followed, besides caring for three boys belonging to her white mistress, nursing them at her black breasts, and sometimes leaving her own young ones in the cabin to come and stay with her white charges when they were ill. These called her Mammy, too, and when they were men and married she still went to see them, and occasionally worked for their families.

"Now, we niggers all lived at de edge o' town in what de whites called Crowville, an' most of us owned little houses an' farms, an' we did right well raisin' cotton an' sweet taters an' all. Now, dat's where de trouble started! We was doin' too well, an' de white folks said so! But we ain't paid 'em no 'tention, jest thought dey was talkin' fer de past time of it . . . Well, we all started fixin' up our houses an' paintin' our fences an' Crowville looked kinder decent-like when de white folks gin to 'mark, so's we servants could hear 'em, 'bout niggers livin' in painted houses an' dressin' fine like we was somebody! . . . Well, dat went on fer some time wid de whites talkin' an' de coloreds doin' better'n better year by year, sellin' mo' cotton every day an' gittin' nice furniture an' buyin' pianers, till by an' by a prosp'rous nigger named John Lowdins up an' bought one o' dese here new autimobiles—an' dat settled it! . . . A white man in town one Sat'day night tole John to git out o' dat damn car cause a nigger ain't got no business wid a autimobile no how! An' John say, 'I ain't gonna git out!' Den de white man, what's been drinkin', jump on de runnin' bo'ad an bust John in de mouth fer talkin' back to him—he a white man, an' Lowdins nothin' but a nigger. 'De very idee!' he say and hit John in de face six or seven times. Den John drewed his gun! One! two! t'ree! he fiah, hit dis ole red-neck cracker in de shoulder, but he ain't dead! Ain't nothin' meant to kill a cracker what's drunk. But John think he done kilt this white man an' so he left him kickin' in de street while he runs that car o' his'n lickety-split out o' town, goes to Vicksburg an' catches de river boat . . .

Well, sir! Dat night Crowville's plumb full o' white folks wid dogs an' guns an' lanterns, shoutin' an' yellin' an' scarin' de wits out o' us coloreds an' wakin' us up way late in de night-time lookin' fer John, an' dey don't find him . . . Den dey say dey gwine teach dem Crowville niggers a lesson, all of 'em, paintin' dey houses an' buyin' cars an' livin' like white folks, so dey comes to our do's an' tells us to leave our houses—git de hell out in de fields cause dey don't want to kill nobody there dis evenin'! . . . Well, sir! Niggers in nightgowns, an' underwear, an' shimmies, half naked an' barefooted was runnin' ever which way in de dark, scratchin' up dey legs in de biah patches, fallin' on dey faces, scared to death! Po' ole Pheeny what ain't moved from her bed wid de paralytics fo' six years, dey made her daughters carry her out screamin' an' wall-eyed an' set her in de middle o' de cotton patch. An' Brian what was sleepin' naked jumps up an' grabs his wife's apron and runs like a rabbit wid not another blessed thing on! Chillens squallin' ever where, an' mens a pleadin' an' a cussin', an' womens cryin' Lawd a Mercy wid de whites o' dey eyes showin'! . . . Den looked like to me 'bout five hundred white mens took torches an' started burnin' wid fiah ever last house, an' hen-house, an' shack, an' barn, an' privy, an' shed, an' cow-slant in de place! An' all de niggers, when de fiah blaze up, was moanin' in de fields, callin' on de Lawd fer help! An' de fiah light up de whole country clean back to de woods! You could smell fiah, an' you could see it red, an' taste de smoke, an' feel it stingin' yo eyes. 'An' you could hear de bo'ads a fallin' an' de glass a poppin', an' po' animals roastin' an' fryin an' a tearin' at dey halters. An' one cow run out, fiah all ovah, wid her milk streamin' down. An' de smoke roll up, de cotton fields were red . . . an' dey ain't been no mo' Crowville after dat night. No, sir! De white folks ain't left nothin' fer de niggers, not nary bo'ad standin' one 'bove another, not even a dog-house . . . When it were done—nothin' but ashes! . . . De white mens was ever where wid guns, scarin' de po' blacks an' keepin' 'em off, an' one of 'em say, 'I got good mind to try yo' all's hide, see is it bullet proof—gittin' so prosp'rous, paintin' yo' houses an' runnin' ovah white folks wid yo' damn gasoline buggies! Well, after dis you'll damn sight have to bend yo' backs an' work a little!' . . . Dat's what de white man say . . . But we didn't—not yit! Cause ever last nigger moved from there dat Sunday mawnin'. It were right funny to see ole folks what ain't never been out o' de backwoods pickin' up dey feet an' goin'. Ma Bailey say, 'De Lawd done let me live eighty years in one place, but ma next eighty'll be spent in St. Louis.' An' she started out walkin' wid neither bag nor baggage . . . An' me an' Tom took Willie-Mae an' went to Cairo, an' Tom started railroad workin' wid a gang, then we come on up here, been five summers ago dis August. We ain't had not even a rag o' clothes when we left Crowville—so don't tell me 'bout white folks bein' good, cause I knows 'em . . . Yes, indeedy, I really knows 'em! . . . They made us leave our home."

The old woman knocked her pipe against the edge of the porch, emptying its dead ashes into the yard, and for a moment no one spoke.

* * *

"I know white folks," Jimboy said. "I lived in the South."

"I ain't never been South" said Harriett hoarsely, "but I know 'em right here . . . and I hate 'em!"

"De Lawd hears you," muttered Hager.

"I don't care if he does hear me, mama! You and Annjee are too easy. You just take whatever white folks give you—coon to your face and nigger behind your backs—and don't say nothing. You run to some white person's back door for every job you get, and then they pay you one dollar for five dollars worth of work, and fire you whenever they get ready."

"They do that all right," said Jimboy. "They don't mind frin' you. Wasn't I layin' brick on the Daily Leader Building and the



Drawn by Jan Matulka



Drawn by Jan Matulka

white union men started sayin' they couldn't work with me because I wasn't in the union? So the boss come up and paid me off. 'Good man, too,' he says to me, 'but I can't buck the union.' So I said I'd join, but I knew they wouldn't let me before I went to the office. Anyhow, I tried. I told the guys there I was a bricklayer and asked 'em how I was gonna work if I couldn't be in the union. And the fellow who had the cards, secretary I guess he was, says kinder sharp, like he didn't want to be bothered, 'That's your lookout, big boy, not mine.' So you see how much the union cares if a black man works or not."

"Aint Tom had de same trouble?" affirmed Sister Johnson. "Got put off de job m'on once on 'count o' de white unions."

"O, they've got us cornered, all right," said Jimboy. "The white folks are like farmers that own all the cows and let the nigger take care of 'em. Then they make you pay a sweet price for skimmed milk and keep the cream for themselves—but I reckon cream's too rich for rusty-need niggers anyhow!"

They laughed.

"That's a good one!" said Harriett. "You know old man Wright what owns the flour mill and the new hotel—how he made his start off colored women working in his canning factory? Well, he built that Orphan Home for Colored and gave it to the city last year, he had the whole place made just about the size of the dining room at his own house. They got the little niggers in that asylum cooped up like chickens. And the reason he built it was to get the colored babies out of the city home with its nice playgrounds, because he thinks the two races oughtn't to mix! But he don't care how hard he works his colored help in that canning factory of his, does he? Wasn't I there thirteen hours a day in tomato season? Nine cents an hour and five cents overtime after ten hours—and you better work overtime if you want to keep the job! . . . As for the races mixing—ask some of those high yellow women who work there. They know a mighty lot about the races mixing!"

"Most of 'em lives in de Bottoms where de sportin' houses are," said Hager. "It's a shame de way de white mens keeps them sinful places goin'."

"It ain't Christian, is it?" mocked Harriett . . . "White folks!" . . . And she shrugged her shoulders scornfully. Many disagreeable things had happened to this young girl through white folks. Her first unpleasantly lasting impression of the pale world had come when, at the age of five, she had gone alone one day to play in a friendly white family's yard. Some mischievous small boys there, for the fun of it, had taken hold of her short kinky braids and pulled them, dancing round and round her and yelling, "Blackie! Blackie! Blackie!" while she screamed and tried to run away. But they held her, and pulled her hair terribly, and her friends laughed because she *was* black and *did* look funny. So from that time on Harriett had been uncomfortable in the presence of whiteness, and that early hurt had grown with each new incident into a rancor that she could not hide and a dislike that had become pain.

Now, because she could sing and dance and was always amusing, many of the white girls in high school were her friends. But



"The Sunny South"—Drawn by Wm. Gropper.

when the three-thirty bell rang and it was time to go home Harriett knew their polite "Goodbye" was really a kind way of saying, "We can't be seen on the streets with a colored girl." To loiter with these same young ladies had been all right during their grade school years when they were all younger, but now they had begun to feel the eyes of young white boys staring from the windows of pool halls, or from the tennis courts near the park—so it was not proper to be seen with Harriett.

But a very unexpected stab at the girl's pride had come only a few weeks ago when she had gone with her classmates, on tickets issued by the school, to see an educational film of the under-sea world at the Palace Theatre on Main Street. It was a special performance given for the students and each class had had seats allotted to them beforehand, so Harriett sat with her class and had begun to enjoy immensely the strange wonders of the ocean depths when an usher touched her on the shoulder.

"The last three rows on the left are for colored," the girl in the uniform said.

"I . . . But . . . But I'm with my class," Harriett stammered. "We're all supposed to sit here."

"I can't help it," insisted the usher, pointing toward the rear of the theatre while her voice carried everywhere. "Them's the house rules. No argument now—you'll have to move."

So Harriett rose and stumbled up the dark aisle and out into the sunlight, her slender body hot with embarrassment and rage. The teacher saw her leave the theatre without a word of protest, and none of her white class mates defended her for being black. They didn't care.

"All white people are alike, in school and out," Harriett concluded bitterly, as she told of her experiences to the folks sitting with her on the porch in the dark.

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"The Sunny South"—Drawn by Wm. Gropper.



A General Must Have His Salute—Drawn by I. Klein

Avenue she accidentally broke a precious cut glass pitcher used to serve some out-of-town guests. And when she tried to apologize for the accident, Mrs. Baker screamed in a rage, "Shut up, you impudent little black wench! Talking back to me after breaking up my dishes. All you darkies are alike—careless sluts—and I wouldn't have a one of you in my house if I could get anybody else to work for me without paying a fortune. You're all impossible!"

"So that's the way white people feel," Harriett said to Aunt Hager and Sister Johnson and Jimboy, while the two children listened. "They wouldn't have a single one of us around if they could help it. It don't matter to them if we're shut out of a job. It don't matter to them if niggers have only the back row at the movies. It don't matter to them when they hurt our feelings without caring, and treat us like slaves down South, and like beggars up North. No, it don't matter to them . . . White folks run the world, and the only thing colored folks are expected to do is work and grin and take off their hats as though it don't matter . . . O, I hate 'em!" Harriett cried so fiercely that Sandy was afraid. "I hate white folks!" she said to everybody on the porch in the darkness. "You can pray for 'em if you want to, mama, but I hate 'em! . . . I hate white folks! . . . I hate 'em all!"

Norman Macleod

SHEEP MEN

It was the year forest fires in Montana were blamed on the I.W.W. I remember the streamer newspaper headlines and how the shopkeepers sputtered with indignation. No streetlamps were used in Missoula. The night sky was as red as any sun from forest fires. It was blamed on the I.W.W. Every year since that time forest fires have swept the rocky mountains. Nobody bothers about them. Only the fire fighters lucky to get a job.

I was working for a truck farmer in Sunday pants who raised chickens. He paid me five bucks a week and board for cleaning chicken coops until he got a guy for three bucks. I left the Bitterroot hoofing.

The Milwaukee electric pulls out of Missoula like a bat out of hell. I caught the first blind twenty feet from the station. The train sang like a telegraph wire. I got into Butte all right. Slept that night in a freight car.

This was quite a few years ago. The Oregon Short Line for Salt Lake City carried twenty of us on the blinds, roofs and tender. The Short Line tenders are paradise for boes. More places for bums than a drag of empties. I held down the rear of the oil burner and rode her clear to Salt Lake City.

Salt Lake is a swell town to get bitter about the capitalist system. The streets are paved and wide as the Mojave desert. Girls look like advertisements for that school girl complexion and most of them walk the streets at night. The buildings flower like saharas with prickly prongs of scabs to keep the jobless out. For two months I walked the streets looking for jobs and the way that town stretched out. I was young as hell and not big, but my appetite was as large as could be expected and I wanted work. I lived on handouts and charity. I slept at night in the University of Utah. My entrance credits were barely satisfactory: a fire escape and open windows. That college course stiffened my back and gave me an education.

Finally I got a job with the Utah Construction Company in Arco, Idaho cleaning sheep pens on one of their corporation ranches. The pens were two feet wide, four feet high, fifteen feet long and the offal a foot and a half to the desert floor. For three months I worked with my nose in a stench, but the meals looked good to me and the sunset.

One week we had a vacation. The lambs had lost their mothers and we crawled on our hands and knees, calling "baaaa, baaaa, baaaa" so that the lambs would take us for sheep and name us mother. And I guess the lambs were right. We worked like galley slaves for the privilege of eating and sleeping.

After three months I left for Salt Lake City. My appetite was just as healthy and my clothes stank more than formerly, but I had three dollars.

TO A YOUNG REBEL

Rejoice! The day has come at last
When you may shout revolt; no fear
Need pale your words—that time is past!
Free speech is here!
Now may your rebel phrases swell
And thunder in this rotten air,
And echo long about your cell;
Nor will these gray walls care.

TED ROBINSON, Jr.





The Empty Bowl—by A. Lededinsky

“Inciting to Revolution”

By HELEN BLACK

The hysteria of war days is back in America but most people don't know it. Workers are being thrown into prison by the hundreds. They are jailed on the most trivial pretexts—or none at all—just as in those ‘red-scare’ days which everyone thought were a temporary phenomenon.

It's a condition here to stay. Workers are not to be allowed to organize unions (particularly in the south); they must not picket, give out leaflets, hold in-door or out-door meetings to discuss their grievances. The minute they try exercising these rights, they are due for arrest. The court and prosecuting attorney hunt up a charge later; half a dozen charges usually.

In several parts of America today, new Sacco-Vanzetti cases are in the making. During a single month, March 1930, there were 1546 persons arrested for holding unorthodox opinions. Since the first of this year there have been about 4,000 such arrests.

Probably the most outstanding of these cases is that of M. H. Powers and Joseph Carr arrested in Atlanta, Georgia, at a meeting of unemployed Negro and white workers. They had not made any speeches or distributed any leaflets when the ‘dicks’ took them out of the hall and ordered them out of town. They called them ‘nigger-lovers’, they warned them to stop this business of bringing Negroes and whites together in one labor organization. Finally they took them off to the police station, where the captain ordered them discharged. When Powers and Carr got back to the hall, they were arrested before they entered, taken to the station house again, and there declared guilty of instigating the explosion of a tear gas bomb which had gone off during their absence. When this case collapsed, and there was danger of Powers and Carr being free to go on with their labor organizing, the prosecution dug up an old carpetbag law of 1866 and charged them with “attempting to incite to insurrection.” The penalty under this law is death. Powers and Carr are at present held in jail without bail while the state goes determinedly about the preparation of a legal lynching. Organizing Negro wage slaves today is feared as much as organizing ex-chattel slaves in post Civil War days.

At El Centro, California—heart of the furnace-like Imperial Valley—the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union was preparing a convention in April. A few days before the scheduled date,

83 delegates were arrested and charged with “inciting to armed revolution to destroy the canteloupe crop.” The bail was set at \$40,000 a piece, and the first appeal to a higher court for reduction of this excessive amount was refused. This kept the organizers safely in jail till after the conference date, when bail was reduced and many of the delegates were discharged. Fifteen of the workers are now held under the state's famous criminal syndicalism law.

The John Reed Club believes that more people ought to know about these happenings. The Club felt that some of America's intellectuals ought to learn what was being done to America's workers. So the Club has sent out a letter saying, will you join in a protest against this persecution? The replies have been prompt and most encouraging.

“An American who will not protest the treatment of Political and Social Radical thinkers and workers is either a moron, asleep, or afraid,” wrote John Sloan, noted artist.

From Brookwood Labor College came a letter from David J. Saposs saying: “I regard the arrests and prosecutions a disgrace and merely a cheap attempt to make the United States safe for the most selfish and arrogant capitalism this world has ever witnessed.”

H. L. Mencken replied: “I am probably incurably opposed to Communism. But I am also incurably opposed to denying Communists their constitutional rights.” (Which doesn't mean that these workers being arrested all over the country are all Communists.)

A letter came from the writer Jim Tully who is in Hollywood, “I endorse your protest as a whole. In a nation in which, last week an Ohio woman shot seven of her young children to death, to keep them from starving, we need more such protests.”

Of course we expected the “Sure”, and “Okay” that came from such friends as John Herrmann and Josephine Herbst, Boardman Robinson, Harvey O'Connor, Genevieve Taggard, Floyd Dell, Upton Sinclair, Robert W. Dunn. But it was pleasantly surprising to hear vehement protests from several college professors.

“The attitude which many American police and court officials are taking toward men and women who have radical leanings is a growing menace to the fundamental principles on which this nation is supposed to stand,” wrote S. Ralph Harlow of the Department of Religion at Smith College.

“The utter lack of justice displayed in certain recent court decisions, at the very time when the Mooney-Billings case has brought such disgrace to American justice, is making thousands of loyal American citizens seriously question the fairness of our courts and our present judiciary.”

Franz Boas of Columbia University said: “I regret with you exceedingly what appears to me as entirely unwarranted hysterical fear of radical opinion and I consider it a most regrettable assault upon the principle of freedom to discriminate against those who hold radical opinions and who have the courage to express them.”

A letter came from Evelyn Scott, from Santa Fe, New Mexico, saying “I have not followed all of the cases you review in your letter but I have seen enough to be able to say, with, I think the advantage of a detached observer, that free speech is no longer possible in the U. S. A.”

Sherwood Anderson, A. J. Frueh, John Cowper Powys, Stark Young, Norma Millay, Waldo Frank, Carl Van Doren, Charles Ellis, Harriet Monroe, Isadore Schneider, Eunice Tietjens, Edmund Wilson, Ruth Hale, half a dozen clergymen, more writers, more artists. A hundred replies arrived in ten days, and they were still coming when the protest and its list of signers was sent to the newspapers. It proves that at least one section of the American intelligentsia is not indifferent to the fate of the workers.

The International Labor Defense, 80 E. 11 Street, New York is handling these cases. They need thousands of dollars for bail and defense funds. Send them *your* contribution.

JUNE, 1930



The Empty Bowl—by A. Lededinsky

A. B. MAGIL

MAYAKOVSKY

Yes, his name was Mayakovsky,
and he was a Russian and a poet and he
shot a bullet into his head

and was dead

and 750,000 workers came to his funeral
and watched the big sixfooted, Mayakovsky,
greatest poet of the Revolution, become
a little pile of ashes that a girl might
put in a vase and moon over.

My bark of love

was shattered on the reefs of life

and he put a bullet into his head

and was dead, Mayakovsky.

And in Paris, in Berlin, in London, in New
York, Los Angeles, in all the whiteguard
emigre ratholes it was buzz buzz buzz.

Cherchez la femme.

Romance. Thrills. Love Interest.

The Great Lover. Romeo. Cyrano de Ber-
gerac. Lord Byron. John Gilbert.

His name was Mayakovsky and he was a
Russian and a poet and sixfoot tall and
he shot a bullet into his head and was
dead.

Buzz buzz buzz.

* * *

In 1908 when he was fourteen Mayakovsky
joined the Bolshevik faction of the Rus-
sian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

Lenin was in Paris and London fighting the
liquidators and the godseekers with
weapons out of Marx and Engels and
the Paris National Library and the British Museum.

*In the present period of stagnation, reaction and collapse we
must learn . . . to work slowly (we cannot work otherwise until
a fresh revival takes place), systematically and persistently,
to move forward step by step and gain ground inch by inch.
Those who find this work tiresome, those who fail to understand
the necessity for preserving and developing the revolutionary
principles of Social-Democratic tactics on this road also, and at
this turn in the road, have no right to call themselves Marxists.*

* * *

Mayakovsky was elected to the Moscow Committee of the Party,
he was thrown into jail, he read books and after a year he got
out and forgot about the Revolution.

In Italy a fellow named Marinetti was sick of the old tired glories
and the sublime tragedies of the human spirit and that was
the beginning of

Futurism.

We must save Art from the schoolmasters and the old maids and
the pimps.

Art Is Dead. Long Live Art.

Mayakovsky was a Futurist and wore yellow blouses and painted
futurist pictures and wrote loud futurist poems that shocked
all the people who had any taste or refinement or sense of
the ultimate values.

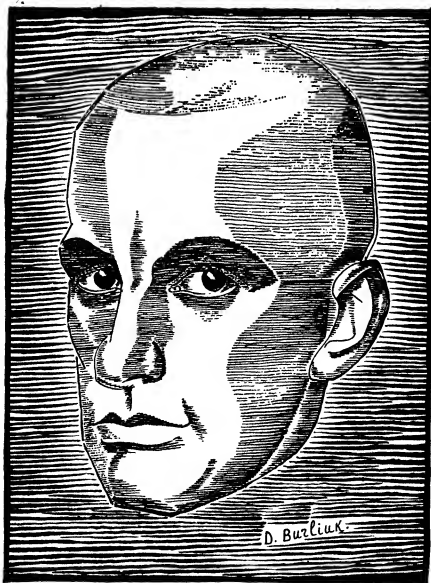
He and Burliuk and some others set off a giant cannoncracker
called: *A Punch In the Jaw of Public Taste* and it was a riot.

And they sat in cafes and drank champagne or wine or anything
and recited poetry and argued and brawled and denounced
Chekhov and Andreyev and the czar's oppression of the people
and Balmont and Bryusov and the corruption of the court
and Pushkin and Blok and anti-Semitism and Tolstoy and
the Lena Goldfields Massacre and Chekhov.

* * *

In 1907 at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International
Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg had forced the adoption of the
resolution on the imperialist war though Bebel had told them
to go slow.

And the 1912 Congress at Basle reaffirmed the resolution and said



This drawing of Mayakovsky was made by
Burliuk, noted artist. "My father," Maya-
kovsky called Burliuk who helped him be-
gin his brilliant career 19 years ago. With
Mayakovsky, Burliuk was among the leaders
of the Futurist movement in Russia. Before
his death, Mayakovsky joined the Ass'n. of
Proletarian Writers. Burliuk is a member
of the American John Reed Club.

Socialists must use the "economic and
political crisis" caused by the war to
"hasten the downfall of capitalist socie-
ty" and all the delegates said yes and
the vote was unanimous.

And in August, 1914, the Social-Democratic
members of the German Reichstag voted
for the warcredits.

Lenin was living in a Galician mountain-
village and read about it in the *Vor-
waerts* and turned to Zinoviev and said:
The Second International is dead.

And Mayakovsky was a Futurist and wore
yellow blouses and painted futurist pic-
tures and wrote loud futurist poems and
hated Chekhov and Andreyev and the
czar's oppression of the people and Bal-
mont and Bryusov and the war and
Artsybashev and the corruption of the
court and anti-Semitism and Sologub
and militarism.

And

*The war is not an accident, it is not a
visitation from above as a punishment for
our sins, as the christian priests believe.
It is an inevitable stage of capitalism, as
legitimate a form of capitalism as is
peace . . . In the period of imperialist
armed conflict between the bourgeoisie of
all nations the sole work of the Socialists
is to direct affairs towards the conversion
of the war of nations into civil war. Down*

*with sentimental and absurd sighs about "peace at any price!"
Let us raise the banner of civil war!*

And Plekhanoff, the father of Marxism in Russia, said we must
save European civilization from the barbarous Hun, we must
defend the fatherland.

Mayakovsky did not defend the fatherland. Mayakovsky was a
pacifist and wrote *War and Peace* and sat in cafes and hated
the war and Chekhov and Andreyev and the czar's oppression
of the people and Symbolism and Rasputin and Artsybashev
and the secret police and the artphilistines and the war.

And he wrote love poetry too.

* * *

At Zimmerwald in 1915 at the conference of the Left Social-Demo-
crats Lenin said:

Martov is an agent of the bourgeoisie.

And Martov was one of the founders of Russian Social-Democracy
and had lived with Lenin and been his bosom friend.

And Rakovsky was so sore he was going to take off his coat and
punch Lenin and Zinoviev in the jaw for saying Martov was
an agent of the bourgeoisie.

And Mayakovsky wrote *War and Peace* and love poetry—*A Cloud
in Pants*, etc.—and hated and hated the war.

* * *

The earth trembled under Mayakovsky's feet in March 1917. The
world was a gorgeous futurist poem bursting into flame.

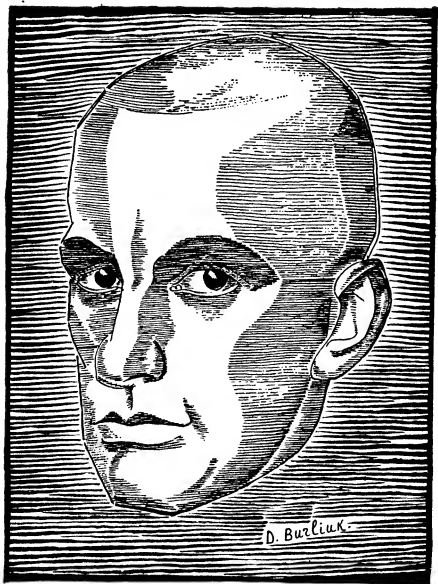
Kerensky the man of the hour, the hero, the glorious orator, the
swayer of mighty passions—Kerensky!

And Mayakovsky knew that Kerensky was only a character out of
Chekhov's plays and he hated Kerensky and hated Chekhov.

And

Procrastination is criminal. To await the congress of Soviets

- 1 V. I. Lenin: Liquidating the Liquidators, published in 1909 in
No. 46 of *Proletarii*, organ of the Bolsheviks.
- 2 V. I. Lenin: from an article written in November, 1914.
- 3 V. I. Lenin: from a letter to the Moscow and Petrograd Com-
mittees of the Bolshevik Party written in October, 1917.



This drawing of Mayakovsky was made by Burliuk, noted artist. "My father", Mayakovsky called Burliuk who helped him begin his brilliant career 19 years ago. With Mayakovsky, Burliuk was among the leaders of the Futurist movement in Russia. Before his death, Mayakovski joined the Ass'n. of Proletarian Writers. Burliuk is a member of the American John Reed Club.



The Streets of Berlin—Lithograph by Adolph Dehn

would be a childish playing with formalities, a betrayal of the revolution. Since power cannot be seized without revolution, we must make a revolution at once. Our slogans should be: All power to the Soviets, land to the peasants, peace to the people, bread to the hungry. Victory is certain.³

* * *

Mayakovsky flung himself into the Revolution, he wrote *Ode to the Revolution*, he wrote *Our March*, he forgot Futurism and that the old art was dead and painted posters and wrote verses about increasing production and keeping the pavements clean and the struggle against hunger and the sowing campaign and the Party cleansing.

He painted thousands of posters and wrote thousands of verses and hated capitalism and Kornilov and Denikin and Kolchak and Wrangel and the imperialist armies and hunger and pestilence and the stench of the old world.

Through the bitter days and the bitter nights, through the Revolution and the Civil Wars, through cold and starvation he worked and worked and he was big and strong and sixfoot tall and his voice was like Niagara Falls.

He wrote "150,000,000" and said: no man has written this poem, 150,000,000 Ivans, workers and peasants, have written it. But Mayakovsky filled every line sixfoot tall with a voice like Niagara Falls.

Sledgehammer of the Revolution, his words were steel rivets, building the new world, destroying the old and Chekhov and Andreyev and the czar's oppression of the people and Artsybashev and Kerensky and the whiteguards and capitalism and Symbolism and poverty and fear and shame and the stench of the old world.

* * *

He went through the Revolution and the Civil Wars and the famine and the Nep and came into the glory of the Five-Year Plan in Four, he wrote poems and plays, he painted pictures, his six-foot body went all over the Russian land, hurling with a voice like Niagara Falls his great steel words, he was the Sledgehammer of the Revolution and 150,000,000 Ivans were filled

with fire and steel.

He went over Europe and Mexico and America and wrote *Brooklyn Bridge* and *Atlantic Ocean* and *Discovery of America* and hated America and capitalism and the clatter and stench of the new old world.

And he was 36 years old and had lived very long and had gone through jail and the Revolution and civil war and terror and suffering and bitter nights and days and he was big and strong and sixfoot tall and the greatest Soviet poet and

MAYAKOVSKY, POET,
A SUICIDE IN RUSSIA

My bark of love was shat—

And he had laughed at Yessenin and had said:

In this life it is not hard to die—to create life is much harder.

And in Paris, in Berlin, in London, in New York, Los Angeles, in all the whiteguard emigre ratholes it was buzz buzz buzz.

Chechez la femme.

Romance. Thrills. Love Interest.

His name was Mayakovsky and he was a Russian and a poet and sixfoot tall and his voice was like Niagara Falls and he shot a bullet into his head and was dead.

Buzz buzz buzz.

* * *

750,000 went to his funeral.

And 150,000,000 that were filled with fire and steel took his poems away from him and said: you have committed a crime against us and against the Revolution, Mayakovsky. All your words thunder with a voice like Niagara Falls:

MAYAKOVSKY, YOU HAVE BETRAYED US.

* * *

They are writing a greater poem, Mayakovsky, the 150,000,000 are writing it with fire and steel.

In shops and factories and mines and mills and over tractorblossoming fields of onesixth of the earth's surface they are writing it.

It is greater than all the poems of Mayakovsky, than all the poems of all the poets.

It is rising up and up, tearing the stinking roof off the world, letting in the lusty shout of the good red living sun.



The Streets of Berlin—Lithograph by Adolph Dehn

EDWARD NEWHOUSE

WHAT'S WRONG with COLLEGE?

After the first flush of freshmanmania you settle back and decide there is something wrong. All around you is tiredness and disillusion and the overwhelming apathy which is the dominating note of our colleges.

Where is the "robust individualism fostered by our competitive society"? Where the will to create? the enthusiasm?

What we have instead is a moribund futilism in the intelligent and a bewildered stupidity in the less gifted. By "bewilderment" of course I don't mean the perplexity of a Joseph Wood Krutch. The college student is intellectually lost but does not know it and is quite satisfied with his state.

It is easy in this land of growing capitalism to account for the optimistic exuberance of the business man. For him it is the land of rising stocks, more profits, infinite possibilities. What then, in this same land of blooming prosperity, causes the philosophy of the college student to be diametrically opposed to that of "the Communists, the captains of industry, the engineers, and the men of science, that is to say those whose main preoccupation is man's relation to his material environment" as Bertrand Russell puts it?

His perplexity and inevitable futilism into which it evolves is in a great part produced by the lack of any visible relation between his academic surroundings and his outside life. This discrepancy becomes evident if you examine the program of say the average sophomore. He takes English, History, Economics, Mathematics, a science—Chemistry or Physics, two languages—Latin, German, French or Spanish, and Physical Training, Hygiene or Military Science. He cannot as yet specialize in any one of these and most of the time, probably due to the manner in which the subject is presented, he does not wish to; so that even were he a most conscientious student (but we are taking the average) he merely skims over the subject. The number of students who become really interested in any subject is just about large enough to satisfy the demand for college professors in that field. An exception to this rule is the case of students interested in one of the sciences.

In English our sophomore is given a course in English Poetry from Chaucer to Tennyson (never later than Tennyson). This ought to be interesting, he thinks, but he learns that it really is a course in the *history* of English Poetry and the students whose interest can survive the maestro's erudite gushings about the participation in Chaucer are fit only to take his place after his book on *How to Write Masterful English* enables him to retire.

Our student also takes History. Here he is given a syllabus with the names of books and numbers of chapters which he is to read for the next time when he will be quizzed and the topic discussed. The discussion will be directed by a professor or an instructor who, in nine cases out of ten, is so fair-minded that he considers it a crime to come to any definite conclusions about anything. Both his attitude and that of the students will tend to, and in almost all cases does, render the hour one of painful recital of meaningless facts, of peaceful reveries and the consequent sweet and exasperating libidinous reflections.

In Economics it is again the same old grind—the date of Adam Smith's birth, the absurdity of the labor theory of value, arguments for and against trusts, mercantilism, Federal Reserve Bank, Socialism, etc. (A widely used outline contains this as one of the arguments for Socialism—"Disappearance of competition would eliminate traveling salesmen")

However, it is during the language classes that the student is plunged into the very abyss of boredom. Most colleges require five years of Latin for an A.B., three or four of which are taken in high school. Except for prospective Latin teachers and students of Roman History this time is absolutely wasted by spending hours piecing together silly little sentences or reading of the atrocities of a low Roman politician. The German Department tells our sophomore that Goethe's *Faust* is the epitome of human wisdom and in French he learns of the pathos of the French school-teachers in German-ridden Alsace-Lorraine.

Is it any wonder then that in one of our leading metropolitan

colleges the average run of answers to a question—"Why do you go to college?" was like this:

1. Inertia. I went to high school. I might as well go to college.
2. Laziness. If I don't go to college I have to work.
3. I go to college because of parental pressure and the absence of anything else to do.
4. Going to college nowadays seems to be the fashion. I want to be in style.
5. At the time I entered the College I hoped to get some sort of an education. Later it was a case of—Well, you need a college degree to get into Medical college. Now the idea is to get as much sleep as possible under the most congenial circumstances.

That, I think, is eloquent.

* * *

The individual is always a social product and in some or many cases, (depending on the social structure) he has a purposive social function. By this function (in a non-cooperative society) I mean a participation in the class conflict of the period or in the technological basis of such a struggle. Thus, the captain of industry has this function while his loafing son has not; Upton Sinclair has and James Branch Cabell has not; the chemist is a social functionary but not the metaphysician; the Communist worker is but not so the mere worker. Bertrand Russell's phrase "those whose main preoccupation is man's relation to his material environment" further clarifies the distinction.

Lacking this function the individual becomes introverted, a quality of mind conducive to the realization of the impotence of the individual—futilism.

The average college student has not this function. Hence his difficulty of adjustment—lack of anything vital to do—perplexity—and again, futilism. Sometimes he is not clever enough to rationalize and his development, as that of the average worker, stops at the intermediate stage of perplexity. However, in most cases he acquires enough of a superficial rationalizing sophism to justify his all-embracing apathy.

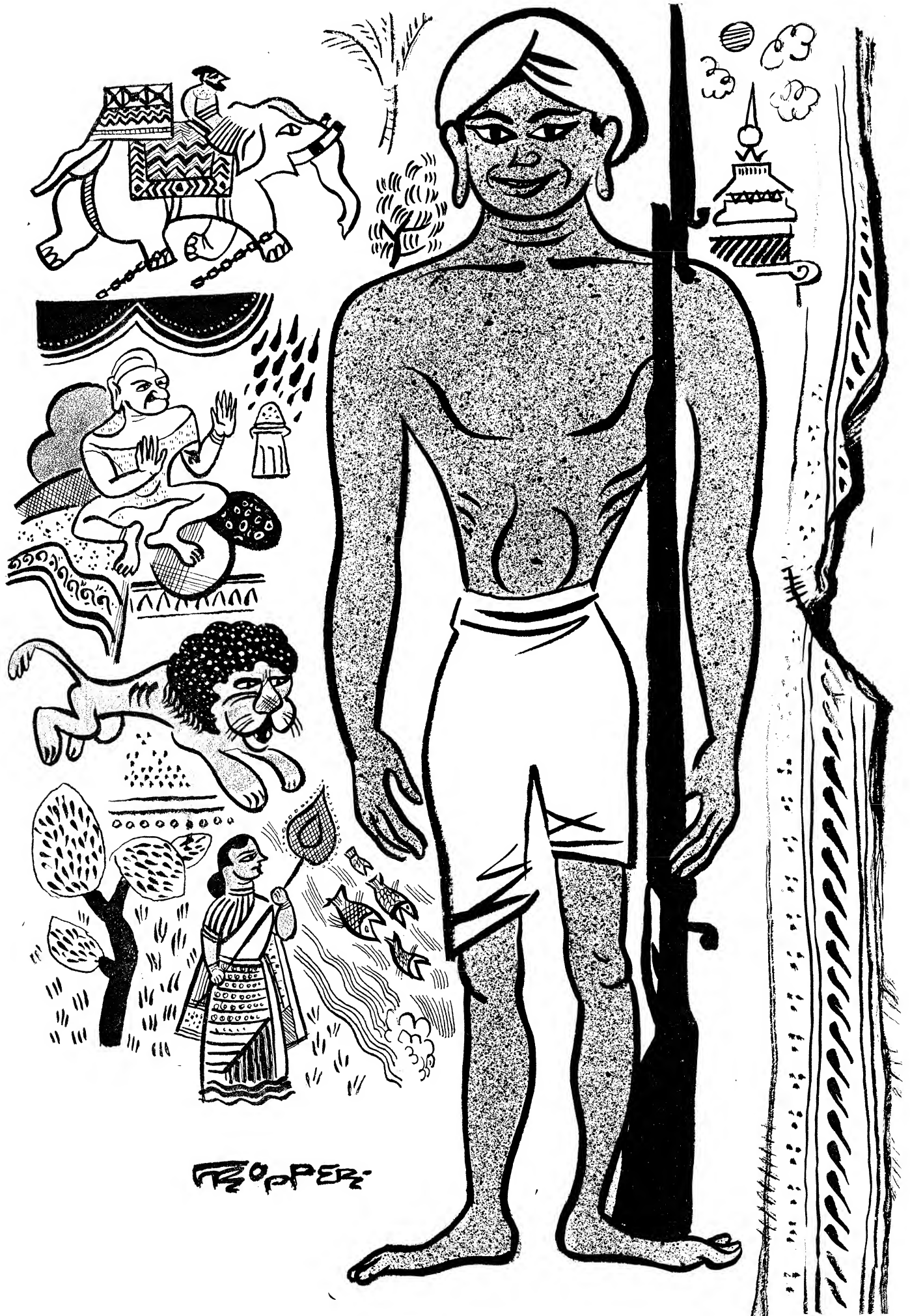
How can this apathy, this complete indifference to society be wiped out? How can everyone be automatically assigned a social function which will render the individual a conscious part of society?

I don't think it can be done in capitalist society. Perhaps you think it can—but then that's your tough luck.

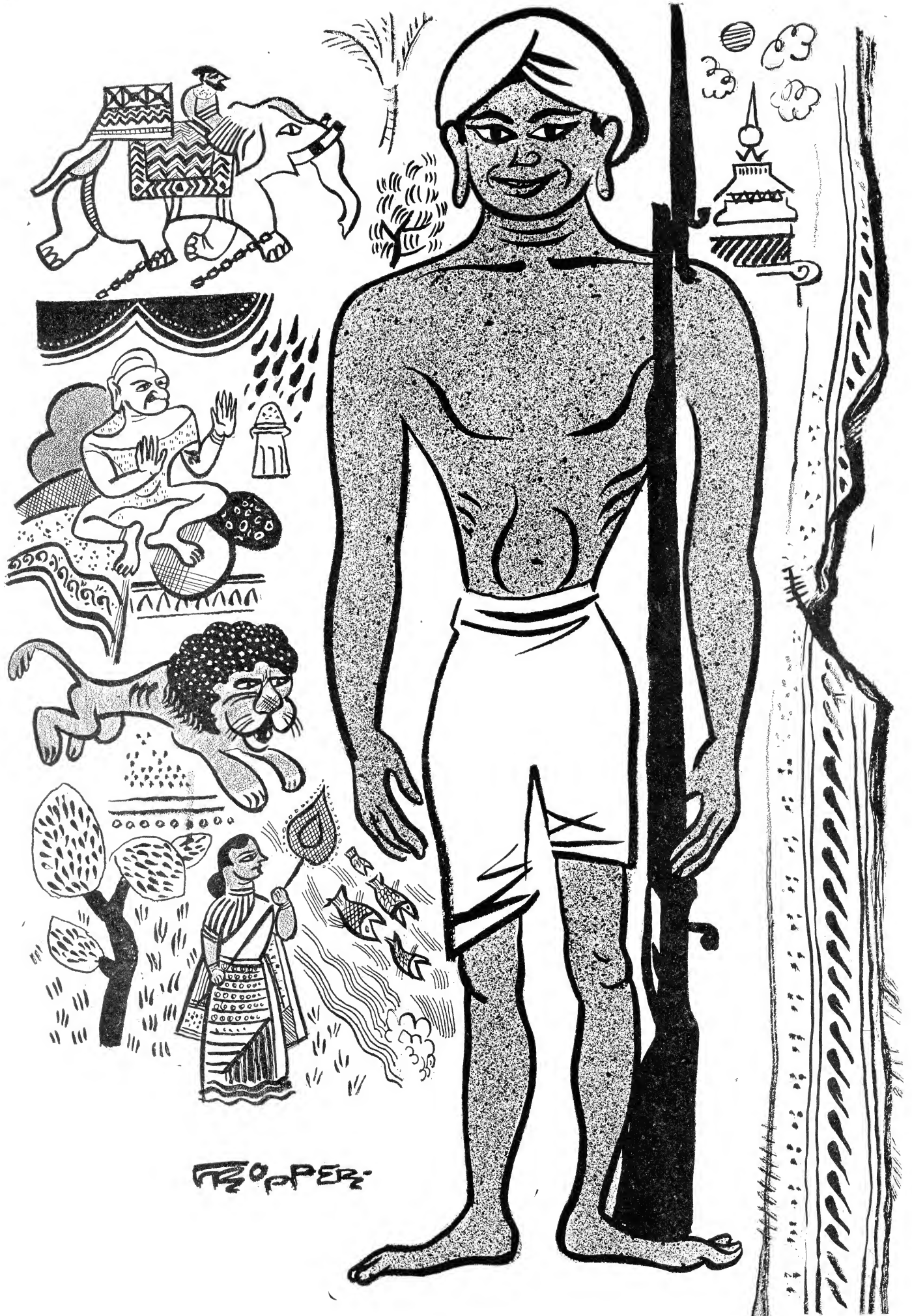
LOYALTIES

*You to your interests
and I to mine;
I render loyalty to my class,
the proletariat.
Nor do I throw myself
like a wanton
on a mythical mass.
My class is that portion
of the pillaged proletariat
which is proudly conscious
of its revolutionary heritage
its mission to break asunder
the economic chains
of industrial and agricultural slavery
and to create a new society
and a new culture.
To them I offer this slight body,
this individual brain,
this song of fealty!*

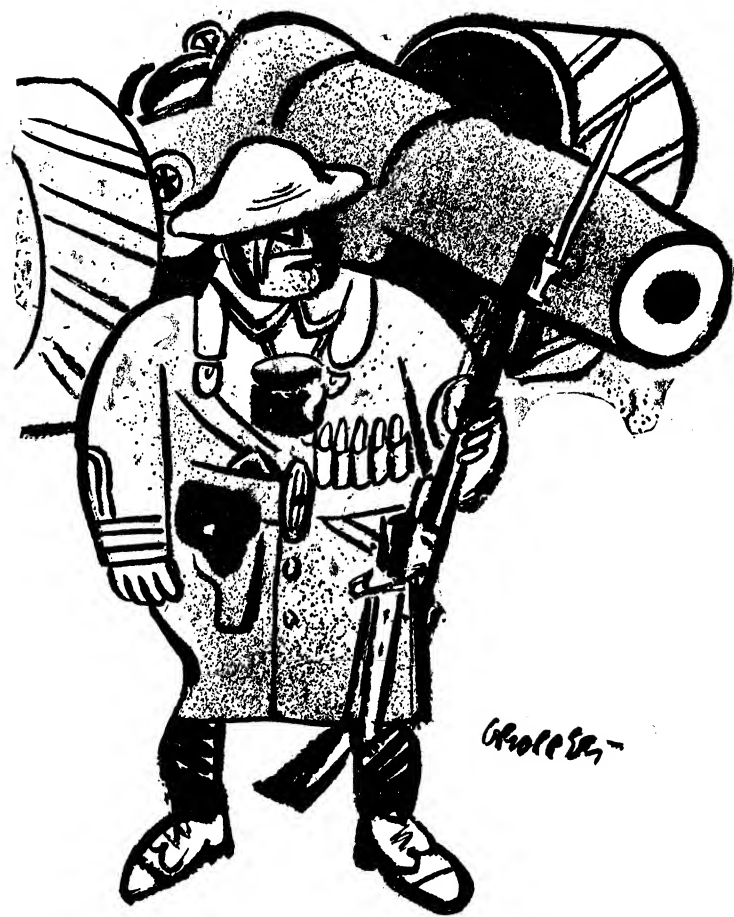
HUGH KANE.



A New Pattern For An India Print—Drawn by William Gropper



A New Pattern For An India Print—Drawn by William Gropper



The Hero—Drawn by William Gropper

The Film and the War

Journey's End, Tiffany production, Gaiety Theatre, New York.

All Quiet on the Western Front, Universal production, Central Theatre, New York.

My memory of the film of the war goes back to the blithe wilsonian era of "watchful waiting." That woodroviaan hypocrisy beamed into existence *War Brides*, which was made into a film by Herbert Brenon. The present parleying era finds its movie-voice in three films drawn from literary sources. Again Mr. Brenon, in *The Case of Sergeant Grisha*, expresses the pacifist's pity. I do not need to make any comparison between the literary-source of the war-film and the film itself. However divergent they may be, their pacifist suggestions bespeak in common the incomplete condemnation of war as a social expression. These suggestions play into the social mood that accepts the fraudulences of capitalist conferences on disarmament. *Sergeant Grisha* is presented as a pathetic tale of an individual with reflections of this pathos in the people who encounter him. The director undoubtedly sympathized with the plight of the escaped prisoner, just as many years ago he sympathized with the plight of the war-bride. But sympathy with a single plight or individual cases is not sufficient when mass-plights, social agonies, human debacles thunder.

Films, like other works of art, convey experiences as well as sensations. The final experience of a film is determined by the temper of the presentation. And that is where war-films fail. Either in the temper of the particular story of the human relationships involved, or in the temper of the treatment. The failure of *Journey's End* is that of the particular human relationships selected out of the mass and maze of the war. The failure of *All Quiet on the Western Front* is that of the temper of the treatment.

Journey's End treats of the aristocratic milieus of the war, the officers' quarters in the dugout. It is an Englishman's play indeed, a product of a society in which a servant is an idiot and a public-school boy (rich man's son) a gentleman. James Whale, who

MOVIES

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

directed the film, photographed the play with a few insertions of outdoor sports like trench raids, etc. The horrors of war are revealed in the breakdown of three officers, the killing of two and the description of a cockroach race—the whimsical English! No one can call this reproduction of a play a moving picture. There is not even the primary sense of how to film a group and its dialogue to make these exciting, rather than blunt, recording.

All Quiet on the Western Front directed by Lewis Milestone is competent work. There are splendid scenes of the charging soldiers, leaping soldiers, men caught in the barbed wires. There is a good moment of rapid flashes of faces in bold. Unlike the dialogue of *Journey's End*, the speech of *All Quiet* is constructed with some attention to intervals, to time and even emotional quality. But directorial competence is not enough. The temper is lacking.

Lacking the informing temper, the film lacks the structure it demands, the heroic structure. The successions of episodes defeat any possibility of a pervasive experience. A sequence of agony is followed by a sequence of comedy trying to be sardonic—the Maxwell Anderson *What Price Glory!* influence. The agony and the "relief" are discharged with equal force and reach the same pitch, so that the experience is neutralized. The final experience is one of no experience.

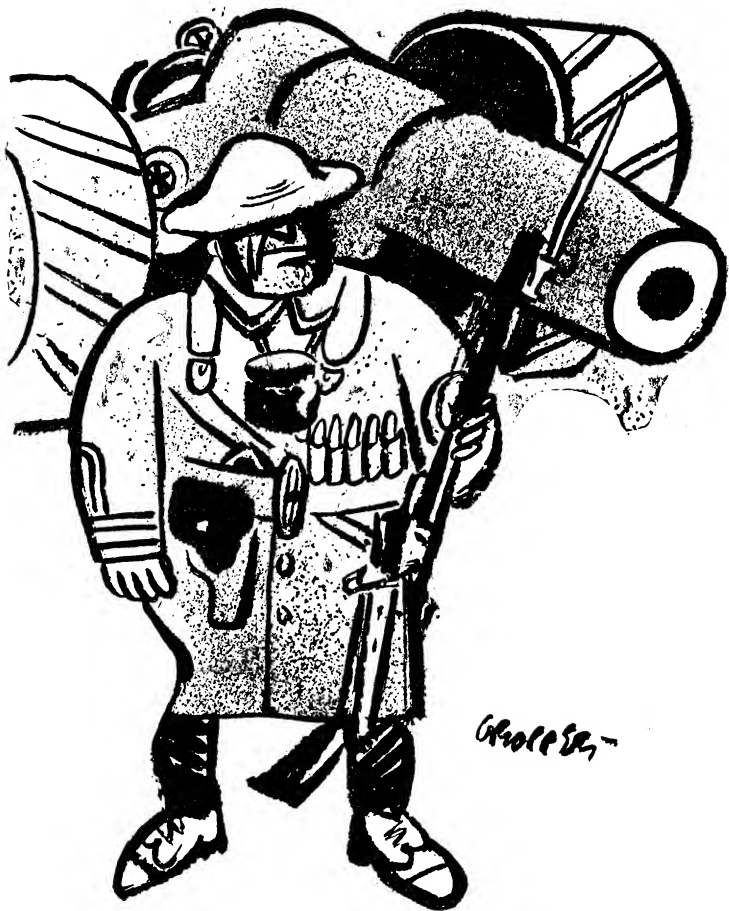
What does this mean basically? The absence of a critical mind, the absence of a concern for the inferences of the material. That *Sergeant Grisha* contains a character who says that the one way out is revolution means simply that such a character is in the film. Could not Brenon have extracted, not the language of this character, but the implication of this language, to lend a charge to this film that would have forced it above the level of pathos into something more devastating? My question is deliberately naive. Brenon is a sentimentalist expressing a society that criticizes its utterance but not the provocation. The opportunist, president or producer, capitalizes this sentimentality in a parley or a picture. This description is true, not solely of a nation; it describes all of capitalist society.

There is one literary work which, were capitalist society sincere in its pacifism, might be made into a film which would grip the inners of the spectator: Andreas Latzko's *Men in War*. But all war-films are sympathy-films, and become, especially among unsuspecting intelligences, partisan-films. The audience of *All Quiet* accepts the German soldiers as its protagonists. Its heroes are in the war. Amid the ominous, the suspenseful, the fascinating! Men are marshalled and mangled and murdered, but the carnage is not offensive, it is attractive, it stirs participation. The drowning sailors in the English chronicle-film, *The Battle of the Falkland Islands* did not dispell the irresistible ambience of battle.

I have suggested *Men in War* as a film. The movie is an intensifying medium: it concentrates ecstasy, mystery, horror. War-films to date, despite well-meaning sentimentality, have concentrated the fascination of battle. Only the Russian film has concentrated the horror. The concentration has been given social and structural significance by inclusion in a material of which the war is but a part. And these concentrations are unforgettable: *The End of St. Petersburg*, *Fragment of an Empire*, *Arsenal*. The French film, *Verdun: visions of history*, for all its "poesie," achieves import because it has treated the non-military aspects of the war, the shattered meadows, the refugees, and given to the treatment a brooding temper, an ache.

•
Turksib, a Vostok-kino production. Eighth Street Playhouse (Film Guild Cinema), New York.

The schedule was 1931, but the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad, under the supervision of our compatriot and comrade, Bill Shatov, was completed in 1930. Turin, a Soviet film-director, built an ode of mobile images to Turksib, the regenerator of Asiatic lands. For it was more than a railroad Bill Shatov built. The schedule, a part of the epochal Five-Year Plan, called for a release of pro-



The Hero—Drawn by William Gropper

ductive, meaning social, energies. Turin has composed a cinema ode to this construction and release.

Turksib is a unity of motifs that are repeated in the progressive structure at exactly-timed intervals. Havoc follows lull, storm precedes subsiding: one anticipates or resolves the other in a constancy of rhythm. Flows are paralleled, each lending its quality to the other: water, cotton on the loom, cloth rolling like water, wood on the lathe, smoke, even wooly sheep. Water is the image-symbol of flow and cessation. The film opens in the drought. The land is cracked with aridity. Man and beast watch, brooding, for moisture. The mountain frees the snow. Moisture trickles, ripples, increases in volume and force, a torrent. The land is quenched of thirst. The creviced tongue of the land is healed by water. But not all of the land, and for long. There is not enough water—lull, the cottonfields are athirst. The looms are dry. Men brood, watching for water. All this anticipates the railroad. When the locomotive enters, one feels that all which preceded was the train, so physiological is the process as it culminates in the first locomotive. The sandstorm, terrific and magnificently filmed, is the rush toward the new protagonist, the railroad. Here is a "hero" never obstreperous but always felt. About it life flourishes. "Old and new" meet amicably in the regeneration of the old by the new. Old men study the new images—words and machines—that liberate them from the thrall of drought, simoom, havoc and lull.

This is a film entirely of structure. It is more absolute than the most absolute of machine-films of a bridge, a press, a turbine. To enjoy it is to enjoy the interplay and repetition of motifs, of constructed harmonies and contrasts. By this construction, the objectivity of the film, inevitable in its documentary material, transcends the mere document. All the documentary materials are assembled to a preconceived end: the release of productive energies, the fusion of the old into the new. The engineers meet the natives and are received by them with bowls of water to quench the thirst. A native child presses the klaxon. The weird utterance of the horn scatters the children. Laughter joins native with engineer, old with new. The children chase after the motorcar. Not perpetrated dramatics but more than mere document.

Rock is unyielding. Mountains must be severed to join Turkestan with Siberia. Rock is to be blasted. Awaiting the explosion all things are lulled. Men, camel, flagpost, flag. Physiologically by this lull we are led in to the explosion: moment of release from lull, moment freeing the road to the rail. Movement ensues. Not melodramatic motion. But graceful bob of camel—into the impact of machines, the sweep of bridges, the U.S.S.R. in construction!

I have called *Turksib* an ode. It is more than an ode. It is more than an ode, though it does not become the epic its momentum strives after. This is by no means frustration. An epic tells of a deed that has been accomplished. The road was not yet finished when Turin made his film. But within the ode the urge of the epic suggests the heroic proportions of *Turksib*, the Five-Year Plan and their significance beyond statistics. The sense of the epic is the *temper* of *Turksib*, product of the Soviet industrial program and Soviet *montage*, the art of the Soviet cinema. Virtuosités of multiple images liquidly fused in the same frame, piston gliding on oil, spinning mechanisms, camera-angles, become structural elements and social persuasions.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.

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America Conquers Britain, by Ludwell Denny. Alfred A. Knopf. \$4.00.

If there was ever a book for American radicals to own, read, and use that book is Ludwell Denny's *America Conquers Britain*. For years, the soapboxers, editorial writers and lesser lights of our movement have been explaining international events and policies in terms of oil, steel, tin, rubber, chemicals, trade routes and the rest. But up-to-date they have had no arsenal of facts on the subject comparable to this "record of economic war" by Denny. It takes the Anglo-American rivalry, now admitted by all except the politically blind, and shows in the most tireless detail just how the wheels go round in the imperialist machine of war preparation. As concrete stuff to build up an unanswerable thesis on the present War Danger this book has no rival in any language. No wonder that Gosizdat, state publishing house of the Soviet Union, rushes a translation through the press.

Not since Brailsford wrote his *The War of Steel and Gold* before 1914 has such a sensational yet thorough work been published showing the basic economic drive to armed conflict. And in the wealth of its illustration and the power of its argument it is superior to anything turned out by any of the Brailsfords or Angells. This is due partly to Denny's earlier affiliation with the Communists, and partly to the insistence of his publishers that they could not touch a book on such a "delicate" subject unless it contained what they designate as "well nigh perfect documentation." It is also the result of the author's unique position in Washington where, as a political reporter, he has for years thrown some of the most acute and embarrassing questions at the official puppets of Wall Street in the White House and the State Department.

It is no news to those who have looked beyond the "hands-across-the-sea" and "war is unthinkable" platitudes, that the British and American empires now clash. On the field of exports, foreign loans, raw materials, ships, communications, industrial monopolies, they have fought, and are now fighting in what is but the economic and commercial prelude to armed warfare. Denny defines and describes these conflicts, and provides the reader with precise facts on every phase of the rivalry from Mr. Hoover's excursions in British-baiting on the rubber issue to outright penetration of American corporations into key industries on English soil. The position of the American colonies and "protectorates" such as Liberia and the Philippines, is skillfully presented and tied up to the general struggle between the powers.

Denny deals summarily with the old-fashioned sentimentalists who still talk about the international allocation of natural resources and the "regulation" or "control" of the bitter battles of the capitalist Powers over raw materials. The United States and Britain, he writes, would be interested in "international" supervision "only of raw materials not now controlled by them." Instead of the sweet partnership between the two imperialist giants, envisaged by the American liberals and socialists, Denny shows with overwhelming proof the increasing rivalry between the conflicting British and American groups.

The book is also quite "distressing" to the professional pacifists. For it explains mercilessly why such peace idols as Ramsay MacDonald become the leading lackeys of imperialism—virtual Empire drummers for the Bank of England, and the bloody executioners of, for instance, the Indian independence advocates. Denny correctly assesses the peace organizations and other middle class organizations as superficial chatter societies, most of them duped by the Quaker imperialist Hoover, and all of them creating illusions in the minds of the masses of the United States.

The book is unfortunately not written for working class readers or for those who suffer most under the rule of the two empires. It was written for those who can afford to buy \$4 books and for the so-called "intelligent" leaders of "public opinion." For the author but slightly disguises his contempt for the common worker, and naturally underestimates the worker's role in future events. Possibly because of this classless point of view, or to save space, Denny invariably uses "we" in referring to the Wall Street government—the government that he shows acts so automatically on behalf of Guggenheim, General Electric, Ford, International Tel. and Tel., Firestone, and Standard Oil. That the workers have nothing in common with these rich robbers is nowhere stated in the Denny analysis.

This failure to emphasize the class relationship also accounts for the fatalism of Denny. Forces making for war with Britain are fast developing. "We" are preparing for this war to secure the profits of the exploiting class. Yet the workers, the only group that can and will fight against imperialist war, are entirely ignored except as the present weakness of their trade unions reflects, for Denny, the relatively strong position of American capitalism.

The book, it must be remembered, was written largely before the Wall Street crash, and before important signs of a declining American "prosperity" were developing in full sight. Thus Denny exaggerates the strength of American imperialism, and fails to examine some of its weakness and contradictions. The growing army of unemployed, for example, is by no means "largely technological," as he would have us believe.

What will resolve these belligerent Anglo-American rivalries? Denny thinks Britain may perceive her plight and surrender. But this is not the way of empires even when they are bankrupt. But imperialist conflict, as Denny knows, is not a form of debate or a gentlemanly football match. So his hopes for Britain's peaceful capitulation are based on nothing more than the secret "understandings" and publicity blather of "disarmament" conferences that lead to more war preparations. The other alternative is a workers' revolution in the imperialist countries. It is for such solutions that the workers, at least in the Soviet Union, are "always ready." It is in support of these workers that every sincere anti-imperialist should be working in America and Britain today.

ROBERT W. DUNN.

Wishbone, by Stirling Bowen. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$2.50.

Wishbone is a volume of three competent, dramatic, factualistic short stories, by a writer who later, it is felt, might easily have something striking to say. His publishers compare him generously with a large battery of other, more famous contemporaries, and not without reason, for Stirling Bowen seems to be in the exact center of the by now well-defined group of writers known as the "young moderns".

But in Stirling Bowen there is the nice balance between sentiment, intelligence, and fact that gives the familiar—and never to be sufficiently praised—illusion of the author's detachment from his story. He has substance, and expresses clearly the many meanings of it. In these stories he renovates and makes plastic the ancient, cumbersome method of interrupted-and-resumed narrative. The emphasis is placed, sometimes, within these stories of a supposed "girl-bandit," frustrated wanderer, and defeatist aesthete, upon points that other authors have made. But the stories are nevertheless real ones, and give the feeling that Stirling Bowen is potentially an original.

KENNETH FEARING.

JEWS WITHOUT MONEY



BY

MICHAEL GOLD



Every one knew Mary Sugar Bum. Some of the most sodden bums made love to her. They bought her a five-cent hooker of rotgut whisky and took her into an alley while she cursed them and bargained for more whisky. We children watched this frequent drama.

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For three nights Esther lay in her coffin on the table in the "front room." While she slept, old men hired at the synagogue sat by candlelight in our kitchen. The neighbors crept in, one by one, and sat with us during the *Sheva*. They offered my mother the most dismal comfort. Why is there so much gloomy wisdom at the hearts of the poor?



O Workers' Revolution, you brought hope to me, a lonely, suicidal boy. You are the true Messiah. You will destroy the East Side when you come, and build there a garden for the human spirit.

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on page 24]

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EARL BROWDER

TROTSKY'S ESTIMATE OF TROTSKY

My Life, by Leon Trotsky, Scribners. \$5.00.

A vivid self-portrait by Trotsky, much more revealing, surely, than its author intended, is given in this book. It is primarily a political platform of struggle against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, written in terms of "literature" and with the skill of a trained journalist. It will be highly praised by bourgeois critics for its literary qualities. Revolutionary workers will examine it for its political implications, for the book is a political weapon directed against the world party of the proletariat.

The theme of the book is how Trotsky happened to become subordinated politically to Lenin; how he planned to "come into his own" when Lenin died; and how the "degenerate" leadership of the Communist movement entered into a conspiracy to despoil Trotsky of his inheritance. Around this rather trite detective-story scheme the book is built up.

Following Trotsky's own hint that he found psychoanalysis very "fascinating," our eyes are caught by a paragraph which seems to give a psychoanalytic clue to Trotsky's "complex." By the use of Freud's method it is possible to understand why a trivial incident of Trotsky's youth, soon after he met Lenin, as related on page 149, remained fixed so long in his mind, acquired the force of a symbol, and finally was embodied in his autobiography. The incident, as related by Trotsky, is as follows:

"An utterly unmusical reminiscence is always associated in mind with this visit to the opera. In Paris, Lenin had bought himself a pair of shoes that had turned out to be too tight. As fate would have it, I badly needed a new pair of shoes just then. I was given Lenin's, and at first I thought they fitted me perfectly. The trip to the opera was all right. But in the theatre I began to have pains. On the way home I suffered agonies, while Lenin twitted me all the more mercilessly because he had gone through the same thing for several hours in those very shoes."

Let each amateur Freudian give his own analysis of this interesting paragraph. Our own analysis is that Trotsky's ruling idea, from the time he met Lenin, was connected in one way or another with occupying Lenin's shoes.

Shortly after the incident of the shoes came the split of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party into the Bolsheviks led by Lenin and the Mensheviks under Martov. Trotsky went with the Mensheviks. From that time on he was engaged in political struggle against Lenin almost continuously until 1917. Most of that period he was either a member of the Mensheviks or in a bloc with them against the Bolsheviks.

With these facts in mind, it becomes obvious that Trotsky is either entirely too modest, or he is an outrageous political charlatan. For on one hand he disclaims the existence of "Trotskyism," that it disclaims any distinctive political line, while on the other hand he claims to have been correct in all his principle political positions at that time. He says: "In all conscientiousness, I cannot, in the appreciation of the political situation as a whole and of its revolutionary perspectives, accuse myself of any serious errors of judgment." (Page 185). Further he quotes Joffe approvingly to the effect that: "Politically, you (Trotsky) were always right,

beginning with 1905, and I told you repeatedly that with my own ears I had heard Lenin admit that even in 1905, *you, and not he* were right." (Page 536) If these and a hundred other claims of Trotsky are true, then it is a historical forgery to speak of Leninism, for Trotsky, if he himself is to be relied upon, was Lenin's leader. Upon that question everyone must form his own judgment; but Trotsky himself, by his false humility before a Leninism which he secretly scorns, demonstrates his knowledge that very few indeed will believe it.

According to the picture Trotsky gives us, Lenin really did not influence the course of the revolution at decisive moments very much, excepting to that extent in which he supported Trotsky and protected him against his natural enemies, the members of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. That is about the only important function assigned to Lenin by Trotsky. For that he expresses much gratitude. This gratitude, however, is accompanied by such an arrogant condescension as would be unbelievable to one who does not read Trotsky's lines with his own eyes. He thinks it important to record for example, that Lenin was "greatly pleased" and even "somewhat embarrassed" when Trotsky complimented him on "the enormous amount of statistical data analysed in Lenin's book on Russian capitalism" (page 144). Perhaps Lenin really was "somewhat embarrassed" by such a compliment, but if so, who can blame him? The incident is typical. Usually Trotsky relies upon intimate gossip to create an atmosphere of close relations between himself and Lenin, contrasting that with a picture of perpetual warfare between the Central Committee of which he was the leader.

For Trotsky there were only two categories of men in the leading positions in the Revolution: First, there were his own "loyal" and personal followers, and second there were the "epigones," the degenerates—Trotsky's contemptuous label for the overwhelming majority of the Bolshevik leaders. This characteristic trait finds its obverse expression in Trotsky's recurring recital of various incidents in which he generously and with high-minded condescension rewards his faithful servants, like an aristocrat to the manor born.

Speaking of his early days in Nikolayev—1896—Trotsky unwittingly gives further insight into his petty-bourgeois mental processes, precisely when he is trying to show how well he understands the working-class. He says: "Never in my later life, it seems, did I come into such intimate contact with the plain workers as in Nikolayev. At that time I had no 'name', and there was nothing to stand between us." In this sentence can be found the full measure of the abyss between a Lenin and a Trotsky.

As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to find any hint of the existence of the *workingclass* in this book. It exists only to provide a dark background which throws into higher relief the brilliant exploits of Trotsky, and the deep virtue of loyal service to Trotsky. As for the Party, it fares even worse; it really seems at times as if the revolution was made not *by* but *in spite* of the Bolshevik Party. Not even the Red Army, which provided Trotsky with his chief claim to fame, comes off much better. Never in his whole story is Trotsky able to make the reader see or feel that Army; it is completely obscured by the dramatic figure of Trotsky strutting in the front, or sitting at his telephone giving "historic" orders, filling up the whole perspective of the picture. For Trotsky it is evident that the Army existed only as an extension of his own personality.

The height of vulgarity is reached by Trotsky, however, when in chapter 41 he explains "How I lost power"! The very formulation is a petty bourgeois, anti-Bolshevik one. "I, Trotsky, had power. This was taken away from me by a conspiracy of the degenerate leadership of the Party headed by Stalin. Stalin seized power, because he was the outstanding mediocrity in a party of mediocrities," such is the substance of his whole approach to and view of the conflict which led to his ejection from the Soviet Union by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Every worker will understand by this formulation alone, why it was necessary for the dictatorship to remove Trotsky from all positions where he could menace its stability. The dictatorship of the proletariat can have



Drawn by Jan Matulka



Drawn by Jan Matulka

no more dangerous or insidious enemy than a leader inside its apparatus who thinks in terms of personal power.

At the moment when Lenin's health first showed signs of failing, Trotsky already sees a "conspiracy" to cheat him out of his "legacy" of Lenin's shoes. He lets Lenin know that he is preparing to fight the Central Committee. Lenin's efforts to prevent this fight, Trotsky with the most elaborate reports of private conversations and intimate thoughts, builds up into "the campaign that Lenin opened," which "had as its immediate object the creation of the best conditions for my work of direction, either side by side with him if he regained his health, or in his place if he succumbed to his illness." After this unblushing exposure of his own inner mental workings at this period, of his conception of Lenin's authority as something akin to the divine right of kingship which should be transmitted to Trotsky upon Lenin's death, of his active maneuverings and struggle to subordinate the entire Party leadership to his individual will, culminating in his organization of a fraction throughout the Party, a separate party organization and hostile street demonstrations, Trotsky still has the enormous effrontery to speak of a "conspiracy" against himself.

Trotsky does not report that already in 1926, a year before he was expelled from the Central Committee, his followers and agents were boasting that the time was approaching when "our weapon of criticism shall be turned into a criticism by weapons." The writer of this review spent nine months in Moscow at this period, and had the opportunity to verify for himself at first hand, that the Trotsky following was busily engaged in preparing the atmosphere of an armed attempt against the Soviet regime.

Limitations of space forbid any attempt to deal with the broader political issues involved in the long struggle between Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party. Those interested in this question are referred to the columns of *The Communist*. Here we have confined ourselves largely to applying the critical microscope to certain characteristic angles of Trotsky's portrait of himself.

A true touch of Trotskyism, the "great man" hurling his scorn and defiance at the "mediocre" masses, finishes off this volume of counter-revolutionary vituperation. Trotsky, for his last word, quotes from the anarchist, *Proudhon*, the following:

"Destiny—I laugh at it; and as for men, they are too ignorant, too enslaved for me to feel annoyed at them."

To which Trotsky responds:

"Those are fine words. I subscribe to them."

After such a book, who should longer be surprised that Trotsky finds such a lucrative market for his writings in the capitalist press and among the publishers? And who can doubt that the book will have a wide circulation among the bourgeoisie, to revive their fading hopes for the downfall of the Soviet Union?

But the workers will have for it nothing but the contempt which is especially reserved for renegades.

Who's Obscene?

Who's Obscene? by Mary Ware Dennett. Vanguard Press. \$2.50

This book is peopled with lecherous old men, the kind of old men who tell each other dirty jokes behind their hands, old men whose mothers and fathers had not the intelligence or courage to tell them decently and frankly about sex when they were young, who got their own information through the gutter they like so much to talk about. That is why they are so jealous that anyone should grow up with a clean and healthy knowledge of themselves such as Mary Ware Dennett tried to give her own two sons in her pamphlet. *The Sex Side of Life* which was printed in the Medical Journal, and distributed in thousands of copies by the Y. M. C. A. and other respectables and against which, some fourteen years later, the vicious and silly Comstock Obscenity Law, on the basis of which the Post Office Solicitor can bar anything he likes from the mails, was invoked. Mrs. Dennett was hauled into court to be subjected to a farcical trial from which practically all testimony for the defense was barred, and to the ordeal of hearing her words and purposes revoltingly mouthed and distorted by an ignorant prosecutor. In spite of Morris Ernst's able defense, Mrs. Dennett was convicted and fined, but finally won the appeal in the Circuit court. This book gives an enlightening record of the history of the case as well as of other cases of Post Office censorship.

J. S.

BOOKS ABROAD

Fischkutter H. F. 13, by Albert Hotopp. Neuer Deutscher Verlag. Berlin.

The age-long struggle of fishers to wrest a living from the sea, and the steady inroad by large fishing corporations against the individual fishers is vividly portrayed in this first novel, *Fischkutter H. F. 13*, by Albert Hotopp, known previously as a feuilletonist in the German proletarian press.

Hotopp uses his pen as a sword not only against the "big business" methods of the fisher capitalists and the impoverishment of the hardy village seafarers, but also against social legislation with a very definite class bias. Paragraph 218 of the German criminal code makes abortions a criminal offense. Lee Hinrichsen, daughter, wife and mother of fishermen destroyed by the North Sea, violates paragraph 218 after voluntarily giving herself to the fisher financier whose corporation is driving the individual cutters from the sea, and whose position therefore compels him to deny his fatherhood. Time and changing customs make no dent on the bigotry and stubborn "each man for himself" attitude of the villagers. They take a fierce joy in helping to send Lee to prison and are themselves slowly broken by the same force that put the paragraph 218 on the statute books.

The plot is at times crudely worked out, and the characters juggled a little too much like puppets on a string. The style is however clear and simple and Hotopp writes with a thorough knowledge of the place and people who have stirred him to protest against their lot.

BEATRICE HEIMAN.

Emil Hollein, Gebärzwang und keine Ende. Neuer Deutscher Verlag. Berlin.

Here is one of the best handbooks on sexual questions in circulation. Embodying high scholarship and a thorough familiarity with the field, both practical and theoretical, the handbook is written in the simplest language so that any worker of an elementary education can understand it. The first part which deals with standard of living, size of family, child labor, birth and death rate, etc. in Germany has only indirect interest to workers of other countries. Parts Two and Three however and the Appendix are of universal interest and could be consulted with the greatest profit by workers everywhere. Anatomic, biologic, physiologic and psychologic aspects of sex; normal sex life and inversions; abortion and every known method of contraception; venereal disease; sex enlightenment of adolescents and children—are some of the subjects treated. The book differs from such more ambitious and exhaustive works as those of Bloch and Forel in the uncompromising proletarian radicalism—an excellent handbook on the subject for every class conscious worker.

LOUIS LOZOWICK.

Poems D'Ouvriers Americains (Poems of American Workers), translated by N. Guterman and P. Morhange. Les Revues, 47 Rue Monsieur-Le-Prince, Paris. Prix: 9 francs.

This is the second of a series of radical collections, the first being devoted to the poems of Pushkin. All of the poems have been selected from *New Masses* and translated with remarkable fidelity and adeptness, considering the tendency of *New Masses* poets to employ the argot of the American worker. Ralph Cheyney's "goofy house" becomes simply "la prison," and Eugene Lantz's "Big Guns" are metamorphosed into "Les Grandes Sirenes." The editors have displayed a keen appreciation of the *esprit* of the authors, and as a result the translations scintillate with vitality, color, and militancy. Cheyney, Lantz, Lewis, Weiss, deFord, Waters, Macleod, Kresensky, and Russak and 16 others are represented, but we miss the voices of Joe Kalar, Herman Spector, Porter Myron Chaffee, and Frank Thibault.

JACK CONROY.

WORKERS' ART

A monthly department for reports and discussion of Workers' Cultural Activities.

A Letter from Canada

Editor *New Masses*:

The Youth Section of the Ukrainian Labor-Farmer Temple Association was organized in 1926. This is an organization of Canadian and immigrant working class youth which has as its aim the building of a working class culture, dramatics, sports groups, etc. and support of all organizations of working class youth with similar aims.

The Youth Section has 55 branches throughout Canada, in cities and towns stretching from Vancouver, B. C. to Montreal, Que., wherever there are progressive Ukrainian workers. The center of this organization is situated in the city of Winnipeg. The membership of these branches numbers over 1300 ranging in age from 7 to 23, after which they are transferred to the adult organizations.

The parent organization, the Ukrainian Labor-Farmer Association has 95 branches with a membership of approximately 3000. The Women's Section has 49 branches with approximately 1300 members. In nearly every town where there is a branch of the organization there is a hall owned by the organization.

The Youth Section branches hold their meetings most every week in the buildings of the Ukrainian Labor Temple. The educational meetings at which lectures, debates, reading of books and articles, question and answer hours take place are held every week. At the end of every month a business meeting is held at which reports of activities for the month are given and plans for future work are drawn up.

The branches have groups of every branch of activity such as mandolin orchestras, numbering 50 throughout Canada, which are one of the noted achievements of our organization; other string orchestras, choirs and dramatic groups, which stage concerts and plays most every week during the season. There are study groups which train speakers, lecturers and leaders for the organization; correspondents groups, and sports groups, which are being set up in our larger branches. The concerts and plays presented are always well attended by the workers and their families.

Our needs for the future are:—Plays in English and Ukrainian which can be easily staged by the youth, sports instructors and handbooks on mass sport training, literature of working class character for the younger youth and children, and kindergarten groups to train the children of very early age.

Every branch of the Youth Section has a library of its own and some branches have large libraries, although it has been difficult to obtain suitable books for these libraries. Nearly every branch of the U.L-F.T.A. has a school where education is carried on under a new system of reading suitable books and relating the contents instead of using text books, and great steps have been made in training the students by this method.

We are willing to forward information and give advice to any organizations of working class youth which would wish to learn through our experiments and experiences.

Comradely,

Central Committee Youth Section U.L-F.T. Ass'n.

JOHN ALAMBETS, Chairman
Winnipeg, Man. Canada.

M. KOROL, Secretary.

Workers Dance Pantomime

Edith Segal and Lahn Adohmyan, both members of the John Reed Club, are cooperating on *Luftmenschen*, a dance-pantomime which will be produced by the Artef on May 31st at the Walter Hampden Theatre in New York for the Sholem Aleichem evening.

Adohmyan has written original music and Edith Segal is arranging the choreography.



A drinking fountain at Camp Unity, a workers' cooperative camp near Monroe, N. Y. The fountain was designed and built by Morris Pass, worker-artist of the New Masses and member of the John Reed Club.

Workers Films in England

Dear Friends:

The Federation of Workers' Film Societies was formed in November of last year with the primary object of establishing in various towns throughout the country Workers' Film Societies which would show to their members working class films from Russia, Germany and other countries.

You probably know that as far as films are concerned this country is terribly reactionary. You in America have seen a number of the Russian productions—even if they have been cut—but here none of them have been shown at all. Practically all the Russian films have been banned by our British Board of Film Censors, and in consequence of the tie-up between the Censors and the local licensing authorities who issue the licenses to the cinemas—it has not been possible to break through the ban. In addition to this there is a pretty strong political prejudice against Russian films on the part of certain renters and exhibitors.

A few of the Russian films have been passed recently, for instance *Two Days, C. B. D., Moscow that Laughs and Weeps*, but these were not taken up commercially by the Trade. We therefore decided to form local workers' film societies, organized on a private membership basis, so that workers would have a chance of seeing these and other suitable films that were available.

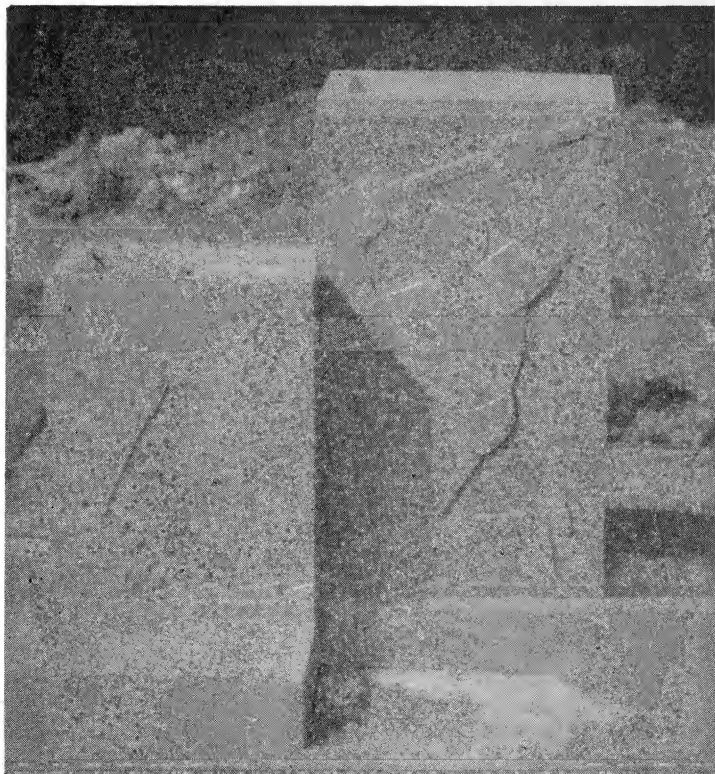
Despite the difficulties we determined to go ahead and we have met with considerable success already. A very strong London Society was formed, and has held three performances and intends to continue with one performance every month. This Society can easily fill a theatre holding over a thousand people, and we have now formed similar Societies in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Liverpool, and others will shortly be set up in other towns.

Of course, later on we hope to be in a position to produce films ourselves—particularly workers' news reels and films of this character.

Will you send us some information about the Workers' Film Movement in America? We notice you are collecting data and we feel that an exchange of information will be mutually very helpful.

Sincerely,
R. BOND

London, England.



A drinking fountain at Camp Unity, a workers' cooperative camp near Monroe, N. Y. The fountain was designed and built by Morris Pass, worker-artist of the New Masses and member of the John Reed Club.

On Proletarian Poetry

New Masses:

There are two types of proletarian poetry: that which is satiric and intended to demolish that which exists and that which builds constructively with a worker's ideology irrespective of other values. To object to the "form" of a writer is merely to mean that that writer has failed to click: that he has missed fire (and of course criticism of this sort usually is subjective but if it is at all a prevalent reaction, we can safely assume it to be valid).

I think (up-to-date) that I have produced little poetry other than satiric (I think it has a fairly concentrated rhythm of speech compounded with an involuntary reaction to a standardized bourgeois world): whether any writer capitalizes, abbreviates etc. what the hell? It must be read aloud for interpretation: the eye usually interprets the printed page in auditory language. But on the other hand, I am afraid the other (constructive) type of proletarian poetry is more lasting and perhaps more effective. That is why I believe Joseph Kalar to be one of the best proletarian poets we have produced: he has written at least two splendid poems, *Now that Snow is Falling* in the *New Masses* and *Invocation to the Wind* in *Morada* 3.

But it is silly to concentrate invective on *New Masses* poetry: as proletarian poetry it has a great deal higher percentage of effectiveness for its objective than the poetry of the bourgeois magazines, say. I believe it is emotionally disciplined (no matter what the form may be). And the writers of this proletarian poetry are slowly but surely developing. And in contrast, look at the poetry that was published in the old *Liberator*! Soft conventional stuff on the whole that was sob-sister but had no militancy, no guts (of course, there were many notable exceptions). In all our "liberal" magazines the prose writers occasionally get drunk and talk in a hard voice about whatever happens to rile them, but they are always careful to be soft and sweet about birds and roses and lady breasts. Our poetry is as hard-boiled and recalcitrant as our prose. And that is what we want.

I get tired of sweeping accusations of *New Masses* poetry. Their criticisms nearly always resolve themselves into "I like rhymes" or "why not capitalize this line" etc. If criticism is needed, it should be more fundamental. Of course the other thing said is "the workers don't understand it." Do the workers of America understand communism; do all the workers understand capital and labor in the United States? Is that any reason they can't do so? There has been no poem in the *New Masses* (if read aloud) that is not as intelligible as a coal strike.

Of course, we probably have faults, and I would like to correct them (for one). I've thought about poetry in relation to the labor movement quite a bit. It seems to me that we are moving in the right direction. If not, some good criticism could be instructive. Lets have it!

Albuquerque, New Mexico

NORMAN MACLEOD.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Eagle or Horsefly?

Editor *New Masses*:

I rather think that Neets over-does it in his criticism of Sinclair and his praise of Wilder. Now I know that Wilder is a writer of beautiful words. I have read his *Cabala*—a really beautifully written book—and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. But what is the philosophy of those two books? Have they a meaning aside from being beautifully written? Are the books calculated to stir the blood to fire and flame? No, they are calm, meditative. They draw a quiet tear here and there, make one exclaim over some character delineation, but they do not thunder a challenge to up and do. Wilder is pre-occupied with the form and substance of words; Sinclair with form and substance of ideas. Wilder may be a greater word artist; Sinclair is immeasurably his superior as a novelist. I cannot judge *Mountain City* because I haven't read it. It may be all Neets says of it. But that doesn't upset the fact that Sinclair has written *The Jungle*, *Oil*, *Boston*. Beside any of those three books Wilder's novels sink into insignificance. Wilder's books are well written and beautifully constructed novels; but Sinclair's books are something more than just well-written novels. The good writing is there, of course, not quite as good as in Wilder's novels; but above writing, above the words, beats a spirit of revolt, of flaming idealism lacking in Wilder's writings. And I don't forget Upton's short-comings either which spoil everything he ever wrote. But to compare him to Wilder is like comparing an eagle to a horsefly . . . Wilder belongs to the past in the guise of the new humanist school; Sinclair belongs to the future despite his serious faults.

HENRY GEORGE WEISS

Tucson, Arizona.

Note: I too disagreed with the article of J. Q. Neets. His advice that the proletarian writer study Wilder for style seemed to me nothing but the old academic banalism. Would you tell a young Mayakovsky to study Chekhov or Tolstoy for style? Would you tell a young Lenin to study Walter Lippman? Would you tell a young Jack London to give up his own natural instincts and make himself over in the image of a William Dean Howells?

This whole business of style study is classroom nonsense. Style and content are one. They cannot be separated into watertight compartments. "Technique has made cowards of us all."

There is no "style"—there is only clarity, force, truth in writing. If a man has something new to say, as all proletarian writers have, he will learn to say it clearly in time: if he writes long enough.

And his material and his proletarian character will create a new style in the world, which will be different and better

than the dead splendors of all the Wilders and Paters in the world.

We are beginning something new. This is something professors can never understand. Yes, we are engaged in an international collective research, into a new life and a new art.

M. G.

The Cotton Mill Rhyme

Editor *New Masses*:

This is in answer to some questions that have come to me directly and indirectly about the tune and last stanza of "The Southern Cotton Mill Rhyme" published in the last issue of *New Masses*.

The tune as I heard it is original, perhaps the blending of some old ballads. But I know that the Rhyme, with a little adaptation, has been sung to the tune of "John Hardy", a mountain ballad that is on Columbia Record No. 167-D, sung by Eve Davis who lives in the Great Smoky Mountains near Proctor, North Carolina.

As regards the last stanza of the Rhyme. On the evening when the folks sang the Rhyme in the Union Hall in Charlotte they told me that the weaver who made the words said:

Just let them wear their watches fine.

And rings and golden chains

But when the Day of Judgment comes

They'll have to shed those things.

During the strike of April, 1929, the workers changed the next to the last line to "When the great revolution comes." Doubtless in other sections people still sing the last line as originally composed. Folk songs are made and changed from the knowledge and needs of the people who sing them.

New York, N. Y. GRACE LUMPKIN

From a Worker in Australia

Comrades:

Many thanks for regular postings of your magazine. It's an ideal mental tonic, especially in this country, where we suffer ideologically and organisationally through the lack of true working class literature. With the exception of the *Workers Weekly* (Communist) there are no labour papers at all. True there are those who style themselves "labour" but friend Green, or the late unlamented Gompers would blush to have anything to do with them.

Things are a bit lively here owing to the Miners lockout; some 12,000 men being affected in New South Wales. State Government endeavours to run one mine with scab labour, protected with armed police. This led to the formation of a Workers Army, some 2000 enrolling in three weeks. There have been numerous clashes, between army and police, many injuries, so far one miner killed. Miners and fellow unionists have declared all hotels and boarding houses black where police are billeted; any shop, or hotels selling provisions to police are also black and picketed.

With revolutionary greetings,
Melbourne, Australia CHARLES WILSON



Self-portrait

Louis Lozowick—age 37, worker, globe trotter, student and incidentally artist. Graduate of Ohio State University. Now in New York. Born in Russia, worked at every conceivable (and inconceivable) trade in the U. S. A., studied here and abroad (is still at it), knows the cheapest lodging places in all the capitals of Europe. Don't think unkindly of him.

In This Issue

Langston Hughes—now living in New Jersey, is author of two volumes of verse. His story in this issue is part of his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, to be published by Knopf early this fall.

William Hernandez—25 year old New York artist, who designed the cover for this issue, was bell-hop, mess-boy on the Leviathan and runner in Wall Street. First appearance in the *New Masses*.

Norman Macleod—23 year old worker-poet-editor of *Morada* lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Aaron Sopher—making his second appearance in the *New Masses* is from Baltimore. He is now working in a New York glass factory and selling occasional drawings to the *New Yorker* and other publications.

Hugh Kane—is a young Nebraska poet making his first *New Masses* appearance.

Robert W. Dunn—is author of a number of volumes and head of the Labor Research Bureau of New York.

Edward Newhouse—is a 20-year-old N. Y. student whose work first appeared in the *New Masses* a year ago.

Earl Browder—former editor of the *Labor Herald* is editor of *The Communist*, author of a number of pamphlets and contributor to many international publications.

Helen Black—is a contributing editor of the *New Masses*. She is now in Santa Fe, New Mexico at work on musical arrangements for a book of Cowboy Songs, by Margaret Larkin, to be published soon.

NEW MASSES



Self-portrait

Louis Lozowick—age 37, worker, globe trotter, student and incidentally artist. Graduate of Ohio State University. Now in New York. Born in Russia, worked at every conceivable (and inconceivable) trade in the U. S. A., studied here and abroad (is still at it), knows the cheapest lodging places in all the capitals of Europe. Don't think unkindly of him.

A Letter From Germany

Dear Comrades:

In the name of many German friends I thank you heartily for the interest you give our proletarian revolutionary cultural movement. Ed Falkowski won great sympathy during his stay in Berlin and we are pleased that it was through his letter in the April *New Masses* that we have established contact with the proletarian movement of America. The *New Masses* is well known here as one of the best reviews of proletarian literature in the world.

But Falkowski's letter gives the impression that the "International Tribune" is part of "I.F.A." This is not the case. The I. F. A. is an association of all the German organizations which stand in the service of the proletarian revolution by purely cultural means. The International Tribune does likewise, but, as its very name implies, on an international scale. It attempts by international exchange of ideas to gather and furnish new material for cultural struggles.

It is not limited to the theatre alone. The International Tribune is equally interested in revolutionary literature and revolutionary art of all countries.

Shortly before Easter, the International Tribune arranged on a huge scale an evening of discussion in the Theatre am Schiffbauerdamm with the Soviet director, Meyerhold, as speaker. The evening was a great success.

At another time we might discuss the literature which is produced around the *New Masses*. Then, perhaps, the awakening proletarian literature of Japan. Or the experiments of the Avant Garde Theatre in France. The International Tribune will be glad to offer all of its collected material to its friends in other countries for similar undertakings. German comrades would thank the *New Masses* heartily for helping in this work by printing the various reports.

We have received a letter recently from the department of cultural activities of the New York W. I. R. and others. Falkowski's letter in the *New Masses* has met favorable results. The first steps towards a comradely cooperation have been made. But this is not enough. Send us material. Tell us your ideas. Ask us about everything that interests you. Only in this way we can establish a strong bond. Please note for your future reference that I've changed my address. It is at present Berlin S. W. 11, Stresemannstrasse 49.

With fraternal greetings in the name of many German comrades.
Berlin, Germany.

HEINZ LUDECKE

A Request From Russia

Dear Friends:

The Russian *Magazine of Foreign Literature* (review of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature) is dedicated entirely to the cultural problems of the capitalist countries. It acquaints the soviet reader with the rising foreign proletarian culture. At the same time helps to build the international proletarian literature and helps to make it a sharp weapon in the class-struggle.

It is impossible for us to attain our goal without a constant and strong cooperation from the revolutionary and Proletarian writers of every country.

The results already attained encourage us to enlarge our basis. We wish to rally around our review the greatest possible mass of worker—correspondents. We address ourselves to every worker for help in our task. Write us about your life, about the problems you're interested in. Send us criticism on the books you have read, the films you have seen, write us about your worker theatres. Write us about the cultural work of the workers, about bourgeois culture-propaganda and so on. Send us your poems and short stories.

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